

Solid Copy



The CW Operators Club Newsletter
October 2025 — Issue 189

President's Message



An intrepid amateur radio operator travels the Balkans. This story ends with baklava. Pg 29.

Last month I operated the first hour or so in the K1USN Slow Speed Open contest. The K1USN Radio Club and CWops are virtually blood brothers/sisters and all but 3 of my 22 contacts (all on



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CWops "CWT" 1 hour 'tests
Every Wednesday at 1300z and 1900z
Every Thursday at 0300z and 0700z
Exchange: name/number (members)
name/SPC (non-members)
Avoid DX Pileups!

CWO Mini-club callsign web site:
<http://cwomc.org>

CWops "neighborhood": Look for CWops on 1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, 28.028, 50.098 "and up"

CWops Officers and Directors

President: Stew Rolfe, [GWØETF](#)
Vice President: John Glover, [W2QL](#)
Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3IT](#)
Treasurer: Craig Thompson, [K9CT](#)
Director: Theo Mastakas, [SV2BBK](#)
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Director: Ken Tanuma, [JN1THL](#)
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Newsletter Editor: Dick Strassburger, [N9EEE](#)

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20m) were also CWops members. All US and Canada although I realised later I was being called by Zaba OG6B (#1856) at one point but the signal was very weak and I wasn't getting the prefix; he was also off to the side of my Hexbeam and too late I remembered I could have switched to a vertical that would have probably done the job! As with the K1USN 'SSTs I'm impressed by the number of callsigns taking part that are more normally heard in the CWTs and major contests banging away at 35 wpm or more. There is clearly a willingness among many established CW contesters in North America including our own members to spend time encouraging newcomers, something far less evident in Europe it seems. I often ask myself the question where will we be in 30 years time when many of us have moved on? The CW Academy does a terrific job introducing CW as a whole but these slow speed "contests" serve as an outreach for budding contesters and deserve support. In addition, our Giving Back program provides a convenient way of giving CW learners conversational practice. I know there is an official schedule of ops providing an hour or so of QRS CW every day at 1900 local time but it doesn't prevent anyone with a few minutes to spare going on around that time and calling CQ at 15-20 wpm. You may even give someone their very first on-air QSO, or simply help build a newbie's confidence. From my experience it can put a smile on a learner's face.

I took the Slow Speed Open as an opportunity to get some practice with my new straight key. I entered in the <15 wpm category and was monitoring the Reverse Beacon Network as a check. My project of getting back into hand keying is a mixed picture and some days are better than others. On the bad days and CWTs, I will go back to the paddles and immediately I'm feeling comfortable and sending CW without thinking about the key at all. I'm back in what many refer to as the "Zen state" where the key disappears into what could be called a *mind-body-tool-action* mental state; it all becomes one smooth flow from mind to CW. You can see this state in any skilled craftsman like a trawler-man gutting fish or a surgeon with a scalpel - even an electrician with a screwdriver or a carpenter hammering nails into wood. The tool becomes an extension of the hand and arm and is effectively invisible to the operator. I feel like this with a paddle but I'm having to think all the time when using the straight key and at times it feels like I'm fighting it. It needs more work but I'm enjoying the challenge. I'll get there.

The CWops Ambassador program will be tweaked to overcome some ambiguities in the Oceania and Asia areas, thanks to the VK members who spotted this. For any new members who may be unaware of its existence, and perhaps a reminder to others, the Ambassador program aims to appoint at least one volunteer member in each global region who will act as a contact for anyone seeking information about CWops. They can also publicise the club when possible using local media channels, and if possible perhaps attend hamfests in the area to raise our profile and draw in new members. Detailed activities will vary depending on factors like the size of the area covered and the number of members. It's not a one size fits all program and not inconceivable that more than one individual suitably located could share the role. Information and coverage maps can be found on our website under <About> in the upper menu bar. You will see there are some areas lacking an Ambassador at present. Most notable amongst these are North Central Europe (NCE) and South Central Europe (SCE) both of which include countries with large CWops memberships. NCE for example encompasses among others Sweden, Germany and Poland and SCE includes Italy and the Balkan countries. These all have high ham activity which for one thing makes them prime sources of CW operators and potential new members. They would certainly benefit from the program so if anyone feels they would like to become an Ambassador in these

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or any other unrepresented area please get in touch. And to those members already involved, thanks..!

Oh, and thanks to our Oceania Ambassador Chris VK3QB for operating VK9NT on Norfolk Island recently and giving me and others a new CWops DXCC!

73, Stew GWØETF, President (CWops #919)

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Editor's Note: Why CW?

Just after Labor Day in the USA, I started my Beginner Class for CW Academy. My first session is a kick-off where the students get acclimated with the tools they will be using, and helping them get comfortable with each other since we'll be leaning on each other for the next eight weeks. As part of the kick-off, I've asked nearly 40 students why they chose to learn Morse code for amateur radio. I think you'll find a sample of their answers interesting – it certainly reflects the majority of CW operators interests at the Beginner level.

Steve – I want to do POTA and I want to do it with a QRP radio. So, I need to learn CW if I want to be effective doing QRP POTA.

Lewis – I have two reasons...one is to stay mentally alert and use my brain. Learning a new "language" to communicate with others would be a good opportunity to do so. Also, I have tremors (ETI) and hope by using a paddle I can learn to control it better.

Blaine – I am apartment-bound on the 15th floor of an apartment building in another country six months out of the year. Obviously, there are equipment limitations, so I chose CW as the practical means to making DX contacts with variable power output levels. FT8 is not a consideration.

Jeff – I rove the country in an RV for half the year and while SSB is an easy answer, CW intrigues me and I'd like to learn it to know if it's right for me.

Frank – portable ops is my only interest in amateur radio. CW will give me the best opportunity to communicate; and it feels more authentic to me as a budding QRP operator.

There is another reason to learn Morse code for amateur radio, and its an obvious one, yet I have never had a student in my Beginner Class indicate it as a driving force...contesting. You and I can conjecture why this is so, but I think I'll just let it sit with "isn't that interesting?"

73, Dick N9EEE, (CWops #3113)

Editor, Solid Copy (SolidCopy@cwops.org)

Ops News and Notes

[Duncan \(Mac\) Fiskien, G3WZD](#)

Welcome to another [Ops News and Notes](#), and thank you for the contributions.

We regret to report the following Members have become Silent Keys.

Condolence cards have been sent on behalf of CWops.



John S. Comella, N8AA #723
on 16th September, 2025



Rich Hoffman, K1DJ #1556
on 13th October, 2025

Jeff, KU8E #208 John, N8AA passed away at age 86 at his home in Fairfield, OH after a brief illness.

John was first licensed in 1954 as WN8QXQ, then W8QXQ. He became N8AA in January, 1977. He lived in Euclid, Ohio from 1965 – 2005 and moved to Oxford, Ohio in 2008 where he built a nice DX and contesting station. In 2015 he downsized and moved to Fairfield, Ohio.

John enjoyed contesting and DXing. He was a longtime member of both the Mad River Radio Club and the North Coast Contesters. He was awarded 5BWAS (#122) and 5BDXCC (#191) in July 1972 and currently is on the Top of the Honor Roll, all earned while living on a small lot in Euclid, Ohio, a Cleveland suburb on Lake Erie. Antennas were a tri-band Yagi and an inverted Vee. John also earned 9BDXCC and 6BWAS at this QTH. He was missing only zone 23 on 80 meters for 5BWAZ (all CW).

From the age of 14, when he built his first radio in his parents' basement, John was an avid ham radio operator. He won numerous contests and awards and participated in two DXpeditions, one to the Grand Cayman Islands in 1977 and the other to St. Paul Island, off the coast of Nova Scotia, in 2016.

John grew up in the Cleveland area where he attended St. Joseph's High School, graduating in 1957. He obtained a business degree from the University of Dayton in 1961 before joining the Navy that same year. He served as an officer on the USS Tulare and later the USS Rupertus. He retired from the Navy in 1965, returning to Ohio. He married his wife of nearly 60 years, Marion

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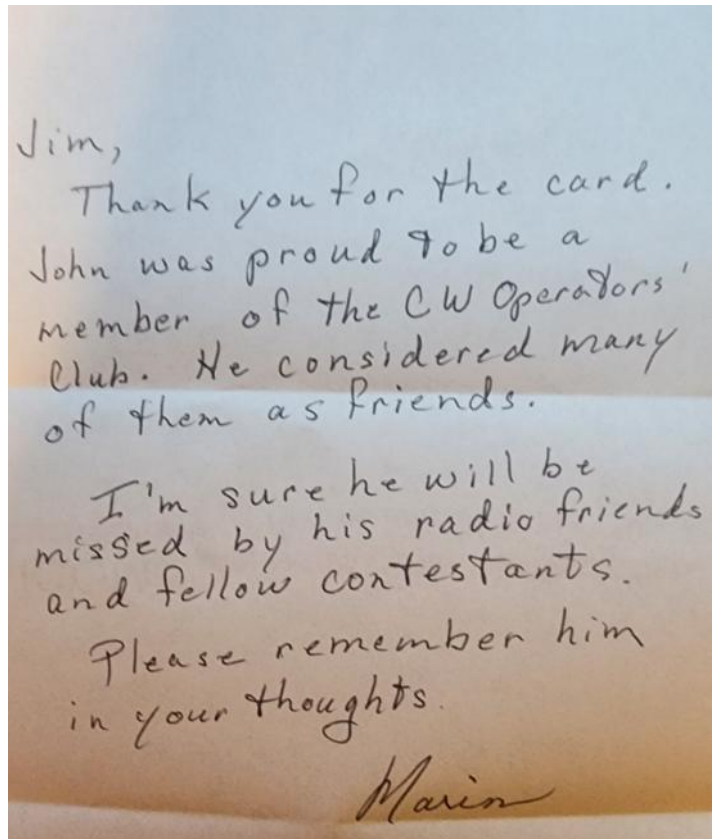
(nee Froehlich) on November 25, 1965. John attended Cleveland State University's Marshall College of Law. He graduated from there in 1975 and worked as an attorney for the government for over 20 years.

John is survived by his wife, Marion, their six children and three grandchildren

Online register book is available [here](#).



N8AA QTH in Oxford, OH



Saul, W3WHK #1392 I have been off the air since early July due to a back injury. I hope someone missed me in CWTs! Just back on the air this weekend for a few hours of fun in the California QSO Party, though I have to be especially careful negotiating the stairs to my basement shack. I'm looking forward to next weekend's PA QP, where I'll be using our club callsign WM3PEN (Philadelphia). I hope, by the time you read this, we will have worked, making you eligible for our cool WM3PEN QSL card.

Mike, W2IY #3031 I just received my 5BDXCC plaque. All contacts were on CW. However, I wanted to bring to the attention of fellow CWops DXers, ARRL will NOT note CW on the plaque or certificate. I was able to make a (fairly) neat CW label in gold lettering on a black labelling tape and this will have to do.



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Doug, KR2Q #428 From the Stew Perry Top Band DX Challenge (December 2024)!

Sponsor	Plaque	Winner
Iguana Air CCC	Numerous Unus, Single-Op, Most Stations with Roman Numerical Suffixes	WF2W
K1DG	Life, The Universe and Everything Award, Top Score, Grid Square ending in 42	KH7X
K1EP	Top Score, Operator < 25 years old	W0AAE
K5JR	N5IA Memorial #2, Top Score, Single-Op, Daytime operation only (sunrise to sunset)	AA2A (N2KW)
K7CA	Top Score, Zone 22	None
K7CA	Top Score, Zone 24	None
K7FL	Top Score, 100% Search-and-Pounce	K10T
K7RAT	Golden Log - Highest QSOs with no busts	KR2Q

Dick, N9EEE My first SOTA. I was recently on a road trip to New York state visiting family and decided to add a side trip to Vermont before heading home. VT is on my bucket list to see in the Fall, so perfect timing. I recently came into possession of an Elecraft KH1 and was anxious to try that out atop the drive-up summit of Mount Equinox (3500 ft) using the stock attached antenna (42 inches) and three radials. I got my minimum four contacts within the first 10 minutes and stuck to it for one more contact before putting it away and enjoying the Fall colors.

We also went to Stowe and rode the gondola to the “top,” however the peak was another 1,000 feet up loose rock...no thanks. That SOTA became a POTA. But now I’m back in WI looking for my next SOTA. Frank, KD9HTQ, you have no idea what you’ve just done. 😊



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Alan AI3A #3053 While on an extended road trip, I recently found myself in Palo Duro Canyon state park in Texas. The canyon is very deep, so I didn't hold out much hope for making any contacts with 3 watts through a 20-meter quarter wave vertical antenna, which has a low take-off angle, that I thought would be blocked by the canyon walls. But, make contacts I did, receiving reports between 539 and 559. The lesson learned is: it doesn't hurt to give it a try.



Pi K1RV/K1USN #639 Members of the K1USN Radio Club received the sad news this afternoon (10/13) that Richard - K1DJ passed away today following a fall from his tower. He had gone up the tower today during some stormy weather to try to secure his SteppIR yagi which had begun windmilling due to strong winds. Apparently he must have slipped coming down the tower and fell to the rooftop below. Paramedics at the scene were unable to revive him.

Richard was an active member of CWops, YCCC, K1USN Radio Club and recently joined FOC. CW was certainly his mode of choice. He had been a CW Academy instructor for over 25 sessions and was well known as a patient and dedicated teacher. Although Rich's wife, Wendy, was obviously in shock from today's tragic news, she made a point of making sure that Richard's CWA students would be notified before tonight's scheduled class because she knew how much they meant to Richard. During our weekly K1USN SST's Rich would always try to encourage his current and former CWA students to seek him out and work him hoping to encourage them to further their interest in CW contesting. More about Rich <https://www.qrz.com/db/K1DJ>

Until the next News and Notes, QAC.

73, Duncan G3WZD (CWops #1979)

NewsAndNotes@CWops.org

How We Were

[Ian Capon](#), GWØKRL

K2CJ, Carl Lump, CWops #2201



ARRL Field Day 1961

K3LJZ (K2CJ) on 40m CW at a farm with the local radio club in Philadelphia.

I was 15 and had received my General class license the previous summer.

Hallicrafters SX-101 RX, Globe Scout Dlx TX, Backup SX-99 on right.

KQ2O (K2CJ) at W6AM Radio Ranch, early 1980s.

I'm in my late 30s in this photo, working DX on 15m with multiple rhombics & S-lines at Don Wallace's amazing QTH in Palos Verdes (former WWII Press Wireless location)



So now it's your turn, do you have a picture to share accompanied by a brief paragraph description, of your early days in radio, experimenting, exploring or just "being a ham".

Please send it to [Ian Capon](#).

73, Ian GWØKRL (CWops #2896)

It's Election Season. Nominations Needed.

Dear CWops member:

It's election season again and the nominating committee is getting ready for the big event in November.

In 2025, we shall be electing the **President** and **Directors** from North America and Europe. Riki and Theo have expressed an interest in running to keep their seats. Stew has declined to run again for President and we are seeking nominations for this position. We wish to thank Stew for his leadership and service to CWops.

The slate so far is:

President: Open for nominations

Directors: Riki Kline, K7NJ
North America

Theo Mastakas, SV2BBK
Europe

Per our by-laws, the nominating committee hereby solicits anyone interested in the posts of President (3 years) and Directors for North America and Europe (3 years).

Please send an email to me at dongreenbaum@gmail.com by October 30th if you are interested in nominating someone or yourself.

73,

Don Greenbaum, N1DG, CWops #2
Chair Nominating Committee

Congratulations

January 2025
QST Cover Plaque Award Winner

Les Chalfant
KI5GTR

In his article, "275 Arkansas POTA Activations," Les shares how he achieved his goal of activating 275 POTA parks in his home state of Arkansas, including experiences and lessons learned along the way.

QST Cover Plaque Awards are given to the author or authors of the most popular article in each issue. You choose the winners by casting your vote online at

www.arrl.org/cover-plaque-poll

Log in now and choose your favorite article in this issue!

275 Arkansas POTA Activations

New ham KI5GTR activated every POTA park in his state.

Les Chalfant, KI5GTR

I started most of my Parks on the Air® (POTA®) activity in September 2022, when I tagged along to Mike Freeze Wattensaw Wildlife Management Area with some of my fellow Cabot Small Town Amateur Radio Service members. Ed Morris, K9KMY, and Loma Westmoreland, KUSJ, handed me the microphone and asked if I wanted to activate the park; though initially hesitant as both a new ham and someone who had only ever hunted parks, I have been hooked on activating ever since.

I soon set a goal to activate all (at the time) 243 POTA parks in my home state of Arkansas. At first, I covered parks within a small radius of my house. But I realized that in order to activate the entire state, I would be traveling for multiple days at a time. So, I developed a planning strategy for parks more than 3 hours away. This involved setting up my logbooks beforehand, researching the routes, and more. Of course, not all would go as planned, but I finally met my goal in March 2023. As it turned out, more POTA parks were added to Arkansas after I met that goal, and I activated the rest of them by September 2024 for a total of 275.



The author's Icom IC-705 and laptop deployed during a park activation.

Learning on the Fly

Early on, my friend and fellow POTA activator Bill Kattner, K5OGR, worked with me to achieve this goal. We took turns driving because — as you can imagine — the amount of money spent on gas started to add up as the parks got farther away from our homes. This and the sheer amount of time spent on the road were some of the reasons that I eventually went solo on this journey. I spent many nights in my truck or a tent in unfamiliar state parks. I recall one instance of trying to sleep in my truck during a hailstorm, as I became stranded after that day's park activation. Trial and error taught me the importance of sticking with a pre-written plan. I also became used to writing my activation routes in a notebook because lack of internet service would cause my GPS to fail in more remote areas.

I have done most of my POTA activities with an Icom IC-7300, a 30 Ah Bioenno battery, and a Chameleon MPAS 2.0 17-foot vertical with a 25-foot counterpoise. I also used a 20-meter Shark hamstick in areas that were harder to activate. I started out logging contacts by hand before realizing the process wasn't as efficient as it could be with a laptop and logging software.



The quaint rental cabin that the author stayed in while activating Lake Sylvia State Park (J5-10236).

Courtesy of ARRL. QST, April 2025.

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Challenge Yourself

[Mike Lunebach](#), **WG9P** (CWops #3770)

I have been a ham since 1971. If you were to look into my logbooks you would see that nearly all my operating has been in CW. When I was young and had few distractions my code speed using a bug was up to 25 wpm, but as time went by and life got more complicated that slipped and I fell into the 18-20 wpm group like so many CW operators today.

My Elmer K9IWN (SK) was a WWII veteran. He served on a liberty ship as radio operator and his CW was impeccable. Yes, he used a bug and when I told him I wanted to use a bug too, he was dead set against it. He insisted that I master using a J-38 first. I listened, did as I was told but when he took me to my first hamfest he pointed out a like-new lightning bug and said he would help me learn how to use it. I was hooked. CW would be my mode from that point on. But it was my Elmer that put the magic into CW for me.

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Frustrated with my inability to increase my CW copy speed on my own, I applied to CWops to take the CW Academy Advanced class. I knew that in order for me to advance I needed the discipline and commitment that the Academy class would call for, and it worked. I hit my years end goal of 35 wpm ahead of schedule. Thanks to the encouragement of my Academy advisor Phil, I have a few CW buddies that keep me advancing.

Taking the Academy course and meeting several other hams, some of whom are much younger than I have opened up my mind to a lot of things in ham radio. I can see now that I have been rather myopic about my view of ham radio and that I really needed to grow despite that fact that I am in my 5th decade as a ham.

I am so impressed by the some of the younger ops I have run into. They are mastering CW faster than I could have ever hoped to. You can find them doing POTA activations and contesting any day of the week. They are using software to log, learn and engineer as if it was their native language.

Since my Academy class used Zoom to get us all together across the county twice a week, I had to use my computer to participate. Then I had to use it to practice my code speed. The next thing I knew I was using it to log contacts. I now have a RBN spotter app on my screen as well as QRZ and the VOA propagation toolset. I say all this just to point out that an old dog can learn new tricks.

But I have noticed something that I think us CW ops need to be aware of. All of my CW ragchews are with older hams like myself. Yes, we like diving into the past, talking about our old boat anchors and careers in radio or whatever but I just am not engaging with many if any young CW operators.

The way we pass along our passion in radio is via relationships and ragchewing builds relationships. It's how I got my CW buddies who are helping me achieve my goals. Hello and good-bye QSOs are not the only way to operate. There are many older CW operators out there who, if asked will QRS or QRQ and spend as much time on the air with you as you want.

I would like to encourage our younger generation of operators to give ragchewing a try. You will meet hams with experience in all kinds of things from designing Yagi antennas to growing prize winning tomatoes.

Delivering A Daily Dose of CW for 57 Years: The Pacific Amateur Radio Guild

[John Silzel](#), N7HCN (CWops #1914)

History

As the story goes, “in the late fall of 1968 three U.S. Pacific coast amateurs, Ken Hughes, W6CIS, Fred Behrman, K7LNS (SK) and Howard Pyle W7OE (who went by YB), became increasingly aware of the lack of a purely member-oriented organization of radio amateurs encompassing the states of Washington, Oregon and California.” A survey resulted in “favorable response indicating an eagerness for an independent organization devoted exclusively to the interests of the Radio Amateurs on the Pacific Coast”, and so the Pacific Amateur Radio Guild (PARG) was born. PARG began as an informal CW social net, a mission that it still fulfills more than half a century later. The inaugural issue of its newsletter, *Random Radiation*, was published in February 1969.



One of the earliest PARG members was Bill Blaumer, K7ZED, a 100% CW operator who at the ripe age of 97 still checks into the net from time to time, sending flawless code. Bill began his career as a radio operator in the US Army, serving in Germany near the end of WWII. It took a few years, but the Amateur Radio bug bit him and he was licensed in 1961. He joined PARG as member number 34 in early 1969. Bill's son Greg Blaumer, WA7MMM, grew up with ham radio in the house and became PARG member number 101 on July 25, 1969.

Greg recalls those early days of PARG:

When [PARG] started, there were two nets daily-- one in the morning and one (I think at 6 pm) in the evenings. There were also designated frequencies for each HF band. Once or twice a year, there would be some type of PARG contest that would run for an entire weekend. I remember working some the guys on each band after I got my general license in 1970.

At their peak, the nets would run over one hour, sometimes as long as 1-½ hours. I remember one of these “marathons” in the evening -- I had just gotten my novice license and it was fun for me to watch Dad checking into the net and listening to the many stations in WA/OR/CA, and sometimes Elmer K3YNN from Reading, Pennsylvania who would check in when the propagation was appropriate. Elmer and Shirley came by to visit 3 or 4 times over the years. It was always fun to hear him on 40 meters at night time and I think I worked him once or twice on 40 meters.

Every summer there would be some type of ham picnic. I think that there were 3 each summer, one in Milwaukie, OR usually at Fred's (K7LNS) house, one on Mercer Island, WA at YB's QTH and one somewhere in California. I remember attending 3 or 4 of these events at Freds house. Below is a picture of some of the attendees at that event. I'm on the far right. I think this was 1971.

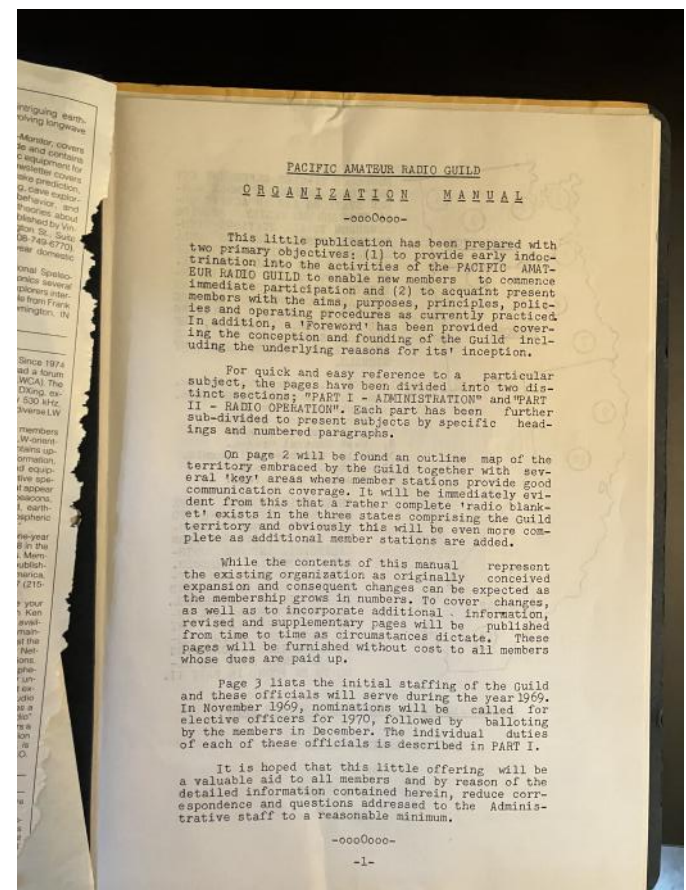
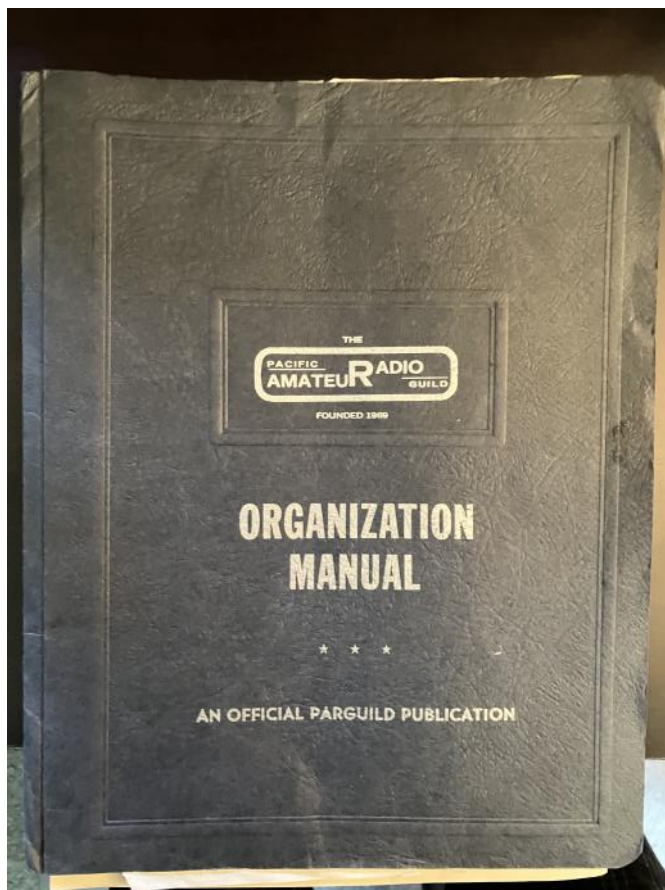
Reading the early issues of *Random Radiation* on the PARG website, it's clear that from the begin-

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ning, PARG's philosophy was focused on quality CW operations. A favorite maxim in the early years was "POWER is no SUBSTITUTE for SKILL", possibly in reaction to the infamous "California Kilowatt" operations of the time. There was an official PARG Organization Manual with sections devoted to Administration and Radio Operations. But it wasn't all military precision-- newsletters reveal vibrant social interactions among roughly 99 "PARGuild" members both on and off the air, including get-well messages to sick members and humorous discussion of the substitution of "Coordinated Universal Time" for the more familiar "GMT". Random Radiation issues expanded on social topics from the net and conveyed news of DX openings, travels by members, chronic rig repairs ("my Swan has flown back to the factory for work"), and even a minor insurrection by female operators complaining about the X in "XYL".



Greg's (WA7MMM) original copy of the PARG Organization Manual from 1969.

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PARG Today

The main event for the Pacific Amateur Radio Guild today is the 40m social CW net, which meets 7 days a week. Things begin promptly at 9 am Pacific Time (1600Z or 1700Z depending on the season), but most stations take advantage of early check-ins (QNI) which start about 15 minutes before the hour. The net frequency is 7.034 MHz, give or take, and if 40m propagation proves troublesome, a follow-up session on 3.545 MHz immediately after the 40m net ends picks up any short path stations that could not copy the net on 40m. There is also an 80m edition of the PARG net that meets Sunday evenings at 9 pm Pacific time on 3.545 MHz. The PARG member roster currently lists 86 members, about 30 of which are commonly heard on the nets.

Table 1: PARG Net Control Stations by Weekday.

Daily AM net times are 0900.

Sunday PM net time is 2100 Pacific Time.

Day of Week	Freq MHz	Call	Name	QTH
Sunday (AM)	7.034	N7MFB	Bill	Bay Center WA
Sunday (PM)	3.545	N6KIX	Rob	Davis CA
Monday	7.034	N2FQ	Fernando	San Jose CA
Tuesday	7.034	WA7AXT	Dave	Snohomish WA
Wednesday	7.034	WB6N	Terry	Donnelly ID
Thursday	7.034	WA7MMM	Greg	Portland OR
Friday	7.034	K7EP	Art	Richland WA
Saturday	7.034	N7HCN	John	Oakesdale WA

Net Mechanics

The PARG nets are directed nets, with net control stations (NCS) that vary with the day of the week (see Table 1). Hopefully this rotation provides a good NCS signal to most areas of the Western US on at least one day of the week. It is not necessary to be a PARG member to check in. On the contrary, new stations are eagerly welcomed and encouraged. On hearing your call and “QNI?” the NCS will assign you a number in the list. At the top of the hour, NCS will introduce the net and read back the list, take any additional check-ins, then run down the list. Each station, when called, responds with news, fun stories, plans for the day, and of course any and all complaints about the current weather. NCS makes a personal reply to each station before moving on to the next number on the list. Usually the net is over within 45 minutes, depending on the turnout.

Typical operating speeds on the PARG net vary from 20 to 30 WPM, with a mix of bugs and keyers being used. We strive to send and operate well, but nobody minds a little drift of a vintage rig, the occasional spelling error or fingers locking up or otherwise misbehaving on the key, which happens to us all. The culture of PARG remains one of making and keeping friends, and encouraging each other in life as well as in the details of the radio hobby. The typical morning net sees between 6 and 12 stations on the list, representing the states of CA, OR, WA, MT, and ID. I have often wondered why we don’t hear more stations from UT, NV, and AZ, perhaps this article will inspire some of you to join us! The Sunday evening 80m net is smaller, frequently with only 3 or 4 stations on the list.

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Why PARG is Special

Chatting with the same people over coffee each morning builds relationships that make the nets more than just an exercise in CW operating. Most weekday “regulars” are retired people, owing to the 9 am time slot, but weekends bring check-ins by PARGers who still punch the clock. Besides weather and gear, we find out who is healthy, who is not, share adventures in home improvement, car service, gardening, puppies growing into fine dogs, cats that rule the house, and the unique facets of life in a diverse range of urban and rural QTHs. We have had chances to encourage spouses who are learning CW, extend condolences to the bereaved, provide camaraderie to operators facing hospice or chronic illness. All, of course, in CW, which becomes not an end in itself, but a transparent pathway for these very human interactions.

The frequencies and times of the PARG nets reflect their focus on the Western US, but there is no reason (time zones permitting!) why anyone reading this cannot listen in to the nets live using the excellent Web SDR servers in Utah (<https://www.sdrutah.org/>). In fact, when propagation is poor, it is not uncommon for several of us to monitor the net both “live” and via the UT SDRs so that nothing is missed. There was a time years ago when I wished that PARG involved a wider geographic area, but I have come to appreciate the wisdom in the founders’ mission. Even if you are too distant to check in, perhaps hearing the PARG format will inspire you to start a net of this type in your part of the world.



(PARG in person: Bill N7MFB, Dave WA7AXT, and Dave, K7GZP represent PARG at SeaPac, Seaside Oregon, 2024)

PARG: Into The Future

Today, PARG exists mostly as an on-air entity, though it has a presence at the SEAPAC hamfest. A website does exist (<https://www.pargnet.org>) and is mostly up-to-date, but most communications take place synchronously on the net and spin-off QSOs – there is no message board or reflector. Most PARG regulars would rather QSO on air than at the computer.

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And while some PARGers do show up in contests and chase DX, the group has a decided preference for ragchewing. Like all CW organizations, we'd love to have more young people join in the fun. I cannot think of a group of people that would be more welcoming, friendly, encouraging, and enjoyable to spend on-air time with than the PARG gang. Our membership includes retired military and merchant marine radio officers, skilled circuit designers, clever homebrewers, vintage radio restorers, fanciers of motorcycles, sports cars, dog breeds. Like any gathering of CW-speakers, there are more than a few fun and quirky individuals who entertain with stories, humor, and the unique flavor of dry wit, style and delivery that is so perfectly suited to CW.

I think the future of PARG is bright. Though PARG has grieved its share of SKs over the years, we continue to see new members and new check-ins. Maybe you will be one of them?

sc

Norfolk Island - VK9NT 2025

[Chris Chapman](#), VK3QB (CWops #2949)

14 September, 2pm local time (UTC + 11), 1,400km East of mainland Australia

We are on final approach maybe 1,000 metres above sea level, perfect flying conditions, a nice sunny day with almost no wind. As I glance out the window I see the northwestern corner of the island come into view and a sense of relaxation washes over me. We are almost there.

The island's well-known cliffs fill the tiny window, and Mt Pitt stands resolute at the northern end of the island. Our QTH is on the northeast corner of the island. This will be our home for the next two weeks.



< *Our first view of the island*

*St Barnabas Church built
1880 >*



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I thought readers might be interested to read a bit about Norfolk Island, it's history, environment and day-to-day life. We don't really need another article recounting HF antennas, pileups, and QSO statistics... but of course, I'll provide some details of the more notable moments of radio operation at VK9NT.

Hopefully this will also offer an insight as to why this was the 8th activation of VK9NT for Luke VK3HJ and myself. We've always had others join us, but this time it was just three of us, with Alan VK6CQ making up the third leg of the trio.

Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island is an external territory of Australia located in the Pacific Ocean 1,412km east of mainland Australia and 900km north of New Zealand, comprising a landmass of just 36 square kilometres. It was first settled by Polynesians around the 14th and 15th century before being claimed by Captain James Cook in 1774 and established as a British penal colony in 1788. Like many convict settlements, it has a dark history during the latter part of the 18th century and early part of the 19th century. The last convicts were relocated to Tasmania (Van Deamon's Land) in 1855.

In 1856, the Pitcairn Islanders, descendants of the Bounty mutineers, were resettled on the island by the British Government. The Pitcairn Islands had become too small for the population. On 3 May 1856, 193 people departed Pitcairn Islands and one month later 194 people landed on Norfolk Island (a baby was born in transit).

It became an Australian external territory in 1914, developing a unique form of self-government under Australian administration. For 170 years Norfolk Islanders have lived on the island and enjoy an easy-going lifestyle and until 2015 were largely self-governed. Norfolk has two official languages: English and Norfolk, which is a blend of 1700s-era English and Tahitian. True Norfolk Islanders are descendants from the British HMS Bounty mutineers and their companions. These original Bounty mutineers and their Tahitian consorts developed a creole language that is still used today by their descendants.

Norfolk Island is home to about 2,200 people and not a single traffic light or parking meter. Cows, chickens and roosters roam free and the speed limit is 50km/h; grazing stock has right-of-way. This includes the chickens.



A free roaming calf enjoying right-of-way

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14 September, 4pm local time (UTC + 11)

As Luke and I are well versed with the QTH and equipment, we got straight to work setting up the station and made a snap decision to erect the DX-Commander before it got dark. The 80m doublet could wait for a fresh new day. It took us about one and half hours to setup the HF station and get the vertical in place; and most of that time was unravelling and laying out twenty radials, each 15 metres long.



The first night wasn't overly busy... Luke got an early night, and I put the first 150 QSOs in the log, mostly on 30 metres.

15 September

Today the main goal was to get 80 metre doublet up in the air. Our usual arrangement of one end to the tree next door was not possible as people have moved in. We opted for an alternative tree on our land, not quite as high (only 20 metres), but by providing an east/west orientation for the main lobes – which should improve signals those directions.

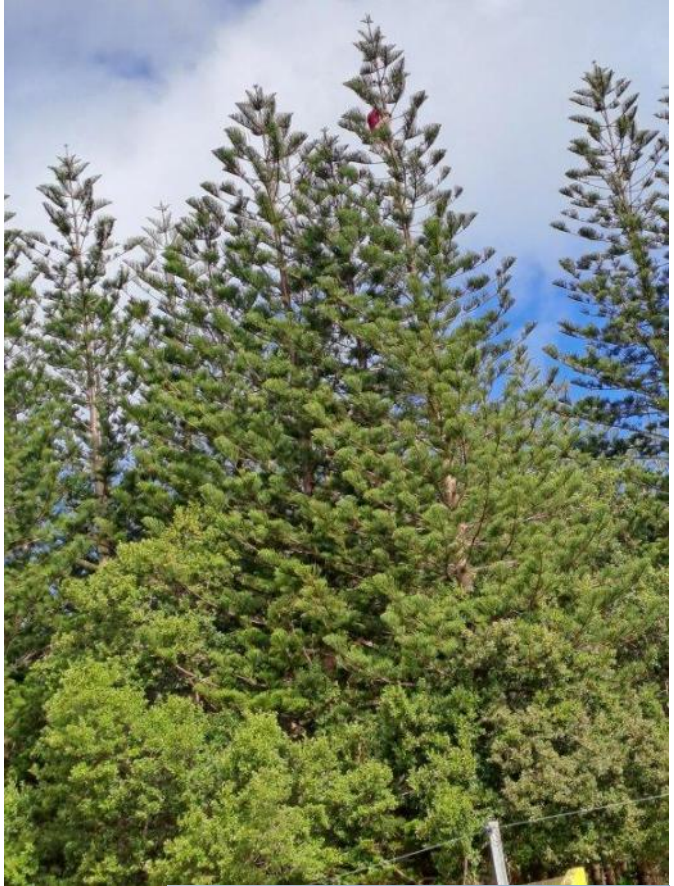
Luke put in his usual gargantuan effort by climbing up the 20-30 metre Norfolk Island pine trees with a length of rope for the doublet. The first tree proved to be unsuitable. The second ascent was a success (and the descent worked out as well). 🤔

The other end of the doublet soon had its sky-hook ready to go and it was time to raise the antenna. Whilst not quite as high as our usual configuration, we expect this antenna will work extremely well... one end at 35 metres, the other at 18 metres and the feed point at about 16 metres high. As they say, a picture tells a thousand words....

Tests with the MJF-962D confirmed the doublet was matching well and radiating our transmissions. The evening session provided some good runs on 17 metres, a few pickings on 30 metres and then closing with a nice chat with Bill, K6SQL on 40 metres. Bed about 1am local.

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**< Luke,
VK3HJ, has a
good head
for heights.**

**Chris,
VK3QB,
testing salt
water
enhanced
propagation
with his
KH1.>**



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16 September

I left the receiver running on 7025 kHz overnight – the static and occasional weak signals are soothing and make drifting off to sleep quite easy... but at 0700 local a very loud OH2 came booming in. Time to get up, make coffee and check 10 metres.

Alan VK6CQ arrived today as well. So, a busy day meeting Al at the airport and getting him settled in.

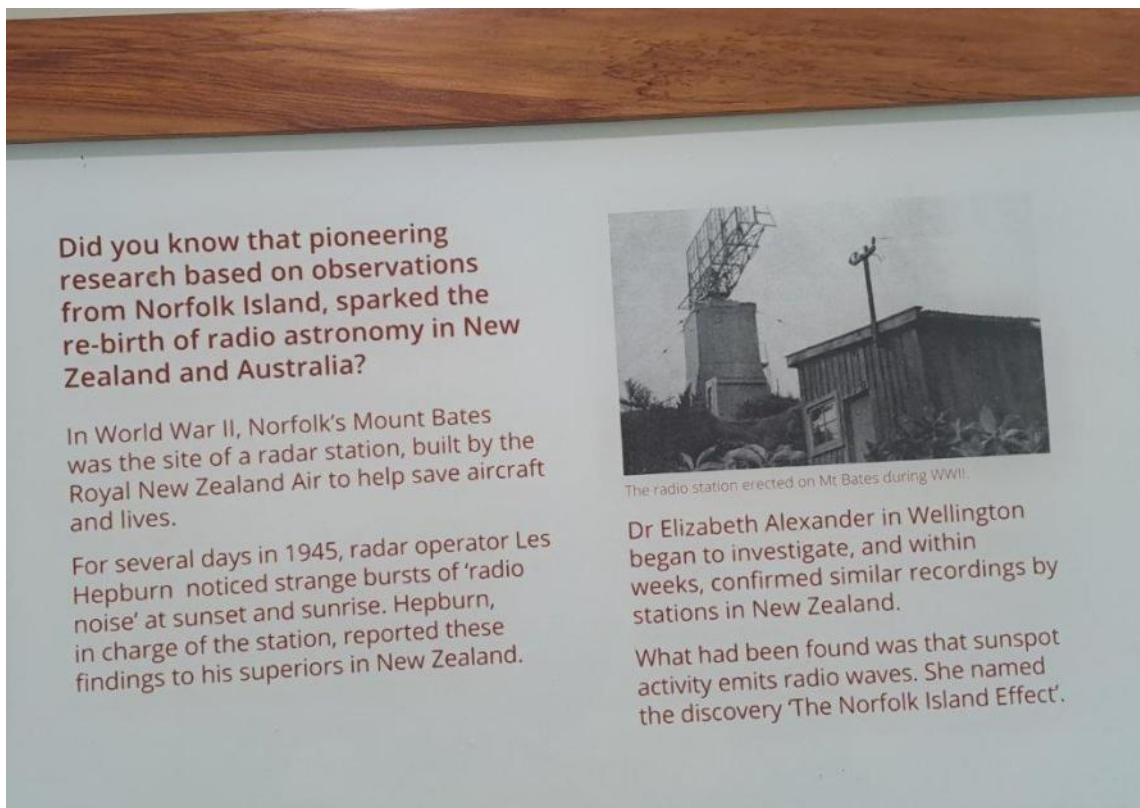
17 September

A quick visit to Kingston by the ocean with the Elecraft KH1 – I was chuffed to get fellow CWops members Phil VK3VB and Andy VK3OU in the log. From the other side of the world, the little telescopic whip struggles a bit – next time I'll take a long wire as well.

The Botanical Gardens

At the base of the road to Mt Pitt lies the Botanical Gardens. As well as providing an excellent series of board-walks and paths through gardens comprising native trees, plants and ferns, there is an information centre.

Fun Fact: The Norfolk Effect



Did you know that pioneering research based on observations from Norfolk Island, sparked the re-birth of radio astronomy in New Zealand and Australia?

In World War II, Norfolk's Mount Bates was the site of a radar station, built by the Royal New Zealand Air to help save aircraft and lives.

For several days in 1945, radar operator Les Hepburn noticed strange bursts of 'radio noise' at sunset and sunrise. Hepburn, in charge of the station, reported these findings to his superiors in New Zealand.



The radio station erected on Mt Bates during WWII.

Dr Elizabeth Alexander in Wellington began to investigate, and within weeks, confirmed similar recordings by stations in New Zealand.

What had been found was that sunspot activity emits radio waves. She named the discovery 'The Norfolk Island Effect'.

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Norfolk Island enjoys a temperate climate being 29 degrees south and surrounded by the Pacific Ocean.

The temperature doesn't vary too much, and we enjoyed daytime temperatures in the 20-23c range and down to 15-16c overnight. Much of the island is covered in pine forests and semi-rain-forest type flora. The national park has decent representation of Australian gum trees as well.



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As you can see from the chart below, the island enjoys pleasant temperatures with minimal variation all year round.

Climate data for Norfolk Island Airport (29°03'S, 167°56'E, 112 m AMSL) (1991–2020 normals, extremes 1939–2024)														[hide]
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year	
Record high °C (°F)	28.5 (83.3)	28.4 (83.1)	28.4 (83.1)	27.9 (82.2)	25.1 (77.2)	23.4 (74.1)	22.0 (71.6)	21.8 (71.2)	23.8 (74.8)	24.4 (75.9)	26.5 (79.7)	28.2 (82.8)	28.5 (83.3)	
Mean daily maximum °C (°F)	24.8 (76.6)	25.3 (77.5)	24.5 (76.1)	23.0 (73.4)	21.1 (70.0)	19.4 (66.9)	18.6 (65.5)	18.5 (65.3)	19.4 (66.9)	20.4 (68.7)	21.9 (71.4)	23.6 (74.5)	21.7 (71.1)	
Mean daily minimum °C (°F)	19.5 (67.1)	20.2 (68.4)	19.5 (67.1)	18.0 (64.4)	16.5 (61.7)	14.9 (58.8)	14.0 (57.2)	13.5 (56.3)	14.3 (57.7)	15.2 (59.4)	16.4 (61.5)	18.2 (64.8)	16.7 (62.1)	
Record low °C (°F)	12.1 (53.8)	12.8 (55.0)	12.1 (53.8)	9.7 (49.5)	6.6 (43.9)	7.1 (44.8)	6.2 (43.2)	6.7 (44.1)	7.7 (45.9)	8.2 (46.8)	8.7 (47.7)	11.4 (52.5)	6.2 (43.2)	
Average precipitation mm (inches)	80.3 (3.16)	86.8 (3.42)	106.8 (4.20)	95.4 (3.76)	101.5 (4.00)	120.6 (4.75)	122.5 (4.82)	99.6 (3.92)	78.4 (3.09)	62.0 (2.44)	72.0 (2.83)	83.9 (3.30)	1,109.9 (43.70)	
Average precipitation days (≥ 1.0 mm)	7.7	8.8	9.3	10.3	12.2	13.0	13.6	12.2	9.4	7.5	6.8	6.7	117.5	
Average afternoon relative humidity (%)	71	72	69	69	69	69	68	67	69	67	67	70	69	

18 September

I had a good run on 20 metres after the CWT at 13z (21 QSOs) and was pleased to work Stew GWØETF and Bert F6HKA in normal operations and say hello. It was the first time working Stew I think – and from VK9NT is a bonus. Over the course of the two weeks, I reckon we logged twenty to thirty CWops members, and I hope a new one for CWops awards for many.

Chris VK3QB
(seated) and
Luke VK3HJ
flying the
CWops banner



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21 September

The clouds gathered during the afternoon. Our run with glorious weather was come to an end. A storm was looming. Propagation also appeared to be suffering from a geomagnetic storm or some such.... All day conditions were flaky, watery and run-rates were down. Even FT8 wasn't holding F&H mode for an extended period.

Shortly after dark the first downpour rained down upon us. Almost tropical. Alan had to make a mad dash to bring in the washing. We got 55mm of rain overnight. (that's a bit over 2 inches for those pre-metric)

Daily Life

Our DXpeditions are more like a holiday. Don't get me wrong: we certainly dedicate a lot of time and effort to being on-air and really enjoy all the QSOs. As Norfolk Island is no longer highly sought after, the pileups aren't quite so hectic, so we have time to exchange QSO civilities a lot of time, which is so much more enjoyable than punching out "599 tu up".

When propagation conditions aren't favourable we make time to socialise and partake in some sightseeing. Most days we pop into Burnt Pine, the main street where all the activity takes place and have a real cup of coffee. We usually go out for dinner once or twice on each trip and meet some local friends for drinks on a Friday afternoon.

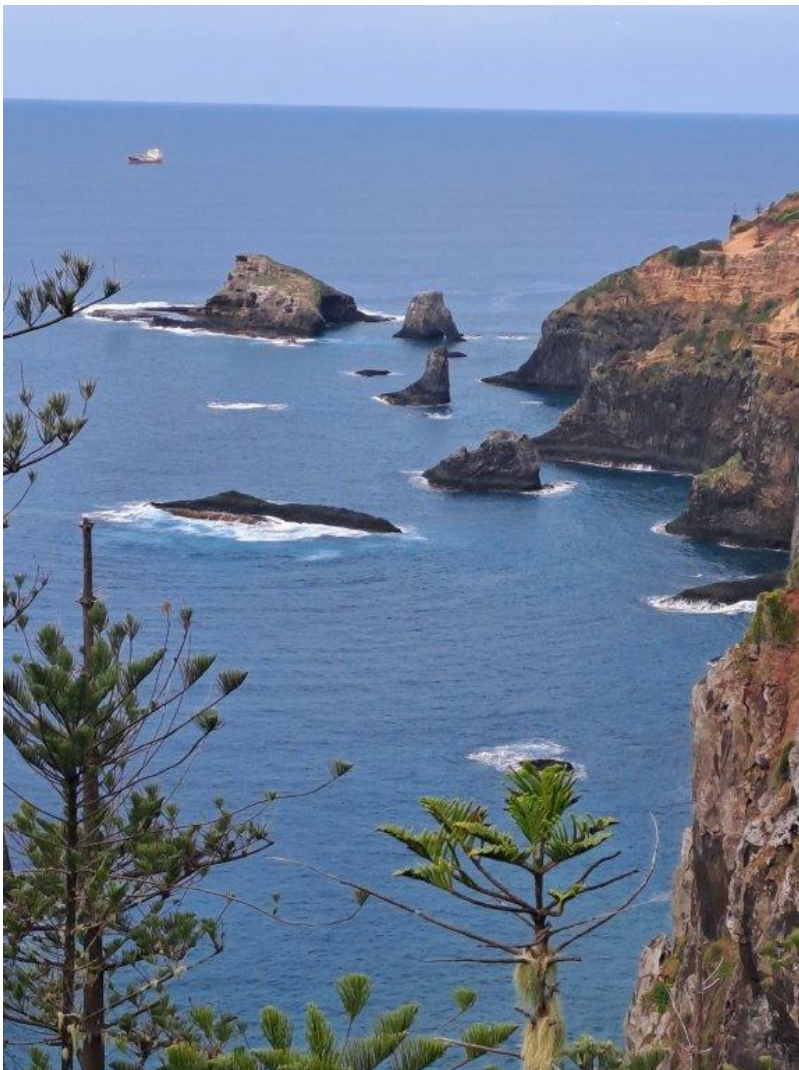
Following are a selection of photos of some of the sites we visited during our stay.



The World Heritage Listed Kingston is the location of the penal colony.

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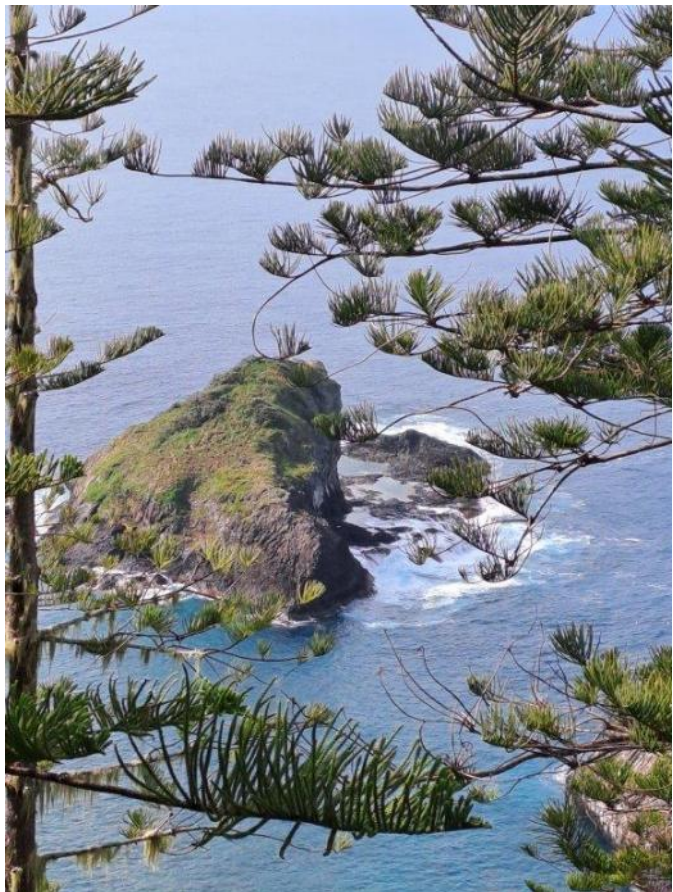


We shrunk.

A 5 km hike from near our QTH to the top of Mt bates – stunning views.

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A 5 km hike from near our QTH to the top of Mt bates – stunning views



24 September

I received an email from Deepak, VU2CDP, CWops #3481. He needed Norfolk Island on 30 and 80 metres. He proposed times that would most likely work – making it easy for us.

Luke got him in the log on 30 metres just after midnight local time (as predicted), and then we did a shift change about 1310z. After working 30m for a while I decided to QSY to 80; I dropped a brief email to Deepak confirming I'd be there at the proposed time.

1338z. Finally heard Deepak VU2CDP breaking through the QRN on 80m. Actually, the QRN was-n't so bad this end – about s3, peaking s5. I was able to give Deepak a solid 559 – very nice to get another CWops member in the VK9NT log. Two new band slots for Deepak – these are the QSOs that really matter to us.

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I still marvel at the wonders of HF propagation... earlier in the afternoon of 23 September I'd been working a rather casual gathering on 15 metres, nothing hectic. One moment I was working JA and NA, then out of the blue, an XE followed by and EA and F stations. Sometimes I have a quick thought about the national dishes (or local wx) and what the ops might be having as a meal that evening.... sushi, steak, borscht, burritos, paella or maybe pot-au-feu. I glance at the grey line map to determine if it's breakfast, lunch or dinner – or, like me, Deepak VU2CDP, a night-owl chasing a new one.

Some ten minutes later I was calling on 80m again. After all, I'd gone to the trouble of matching the antenna, and if Deepak could copy me 559, there must be other insomniacs in the night-time shadows seeking out some interesting DX. I heard a weak signal down in the noise floor... it probably took another fifteen minutes for the rise and fall of propagation and favourable breaks in the static, but finally I closed the deal with BI8EUY: another good one to get in the log. By now it was almost 3 am local time. I considered my options..... and ended up having a good run on 30 metres – check the RBN map below.



callsign

spotter-callsign

vk9nt

spotter	spotted	distance km	freq	mode	type	snr	speed	time	seen
DR4W	VK9NT	16961 km	10111.9	CW	CQ	20 dB	24 wpm	1633z 23 Sep	now
DR4W	VK9NT	16961 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	20 dB	25 wpm	1633z 23 Sep	now
VK2GEL	VK9NT	1749 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	44 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	102 seconds ago
VK6ANC	VK9NT	4956 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	28 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	103 seconds ago
RUSCZD	VK9NT	13674 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	30 dB	24 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	103 seconds ago
KL2R	VK9NT	11135 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	13 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	104 seconds ago
OK1FCJ	VK9NT	16785 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	21 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	104 seconds ago
HA1VHF	VK9NT	16829 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	20 dB	24 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	105 seconds ago
NT6Q	VK9NT	10488 km	10112.1	CW	CQ	13 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	105 seconds ago
DF2CK	VK9NT	16737 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	17 dB	24 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	108 seconds ago
ZL3X	VK9NT	1640 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	36 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	109 seconds ago
VK3RASA	VK9NT	2274 km	10111.9	CW	CQ	28 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	109 seconds ago
3D2AG	VK9NT	1616 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	26 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	110 seconds ago
JJ2VLY	VK9NT	7775 km	10111.9	CW	CQ	23 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	110 seconds ago
ZL2KS	VK9NT	1492 km	10111.9	CW	CQ	22 dB	25 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	110 seconds ago
VK2RH	VK9NT	1676 km	10112.0	CW	CQ	25 dB	24 wpm	1632z 23 Sep	111 seconds ago

<in

Probably everyone reading this has checked the cluster at one time or another and noted some of the colourful comments that people post.. as a CW operator you aspire to have “gud ears”, and go to any lengths to avoid the description “cloth ears”. It’s a bit of a badge of honour if you’re

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on a DXpedition and you manage to get away with almost no criticism and maybe even the odd compliment... well, you can imagine how pleased I was to be described as having a "GOLD EAR"!

DX callsign: VK9NT ×					
 Spotter	 Freq.	 DX	 Time	 Info	 Country
SQ9IAU-@	10112.0	VK9NT	16:51 23 Sep	Up . Superb operator. Txn	Norfolk Island
F4HZR	10112.0	VK9NT	16:24 23 Sep	UP	Norfolk Island
BI8EUY-@	3508.0	VK9NT	15:57 23 Sep	TNX GOLD EAR!	Norfolk Island
W9UUM	10111.0	VK9NT	13:29 23 Sep		Norfolk Island
K0ZX-@	10111.0	VK9NT	13:20 23 Sep		Norfolk Island
NU4N	10111.0	VK9NT	13:17 23 Sep	UP 2 EASY	Norfolk Island

Maybe CWops should have an annual Golden Ear Award? 😊

0700Z rolls around and I should be ready for CWT. Instead, I'm up to my armpits in a pileup on 6 metres. When it opens, it's open. Over the course of an hour, I add about 70 QSOs to the log on the magic band, mostly JA, but a few HL for good measure.

In very exciting news for us, but dull news for the islanders, it was a slow news week and we made the front page!

The Norfolk ISLANDER

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Volume 59, No. 36

SATURDAY, 20th SEPTEMBER 2025

Price \$3.50

High-resolution imaging and mapping of Norfolk Island's corals to continue

Tom Muir from the Coral Health Team at UNSW Sydney and the University of Newcastle will return to Emily and Slaughter Bay on 26 and 27 September.

Over two days, Tom will carry out high-resolution imaging and mapping of the corals using a remotely operated surface drone - a small blue boat nicknamed Sully.

It will take Tom about two days to photograph every coral in the Emily and Slaughter Bay reefs. This will be the fourth time this year that the reefs

(continued overleaf)

Amateur Radio Expedition on Norfolk Island

Since 2013, Amateur Radio Operators Chris and Luke, plus a few others have been visiting Norfolk Island on an almost annual basis to make international radio contacts on shortwave radio.

Amateur Radio is a technical hobby involving electronics and radio communications and enables qualified radio amateurs to communicate with other radio amateurs all over the world.

Many Norfolk Islanders will remember the late Jim Smith and Kirsty Jenkins-Smith, and John Anderson who were long-term residents and radio amateurs on the Island.

Hosted at Pacific Palms, the expedition station VIKONT has radio equipment and temporary antennae set up for the second half of September. Operators Chris and Luke from Victoria and

(continued inside)

OPEN
7
DAYS

FOODLAND

PH
22018

Monday - Saturday 8am - 6pm
Sunday 9am - 6pm

FULL SERVICE SUPERMARKET
In-Store Delicatessen - Fresh Local Produce

Solid Copy October 2025 Page 27

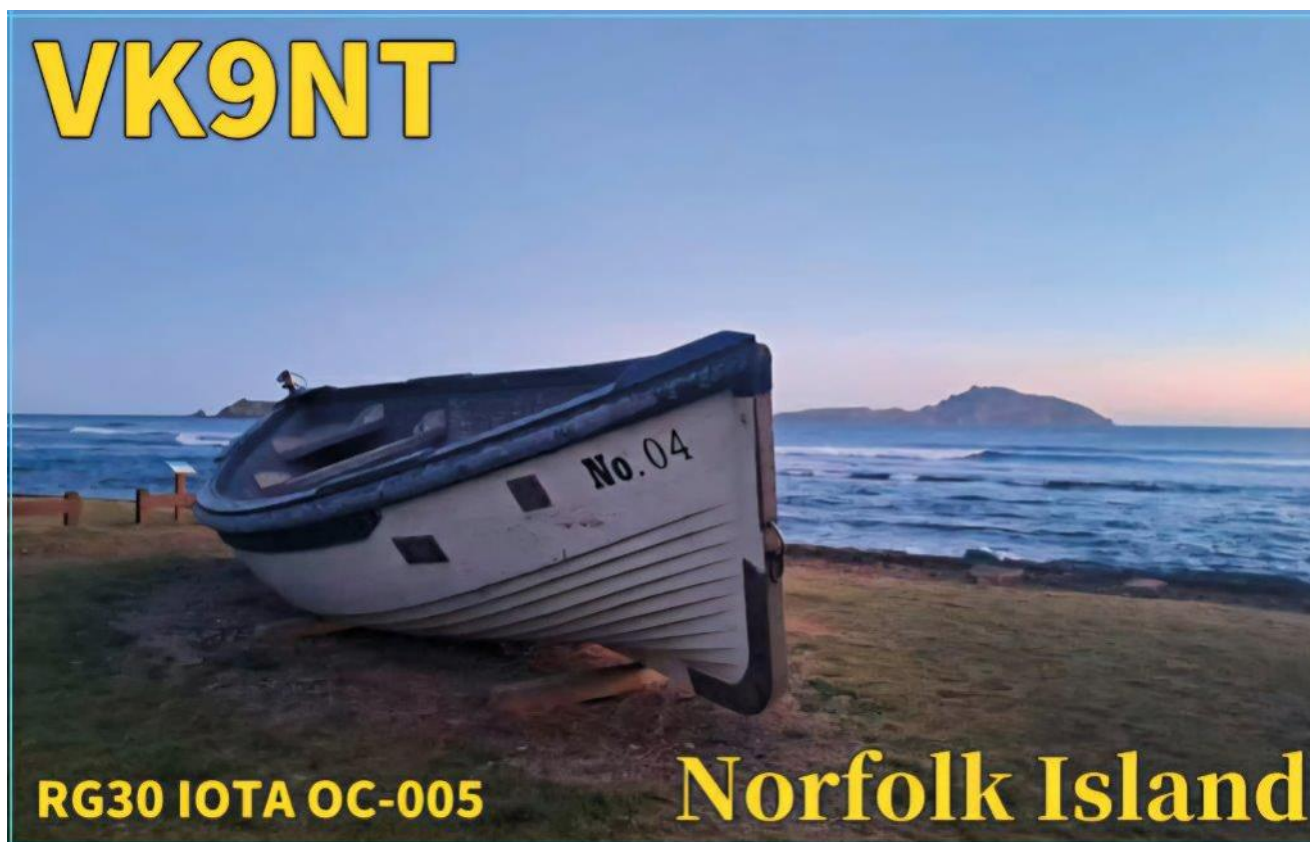


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This story from the South Pacific wouldn't be complete without some numbers. Herewith, I present our QSO statistics – and always happy to report more CW QSOs than FT8! And the final artwork for our 2025 QSL Card.

MODE/BAND	80 m	60 m	40 m	30 m	20 m	17 m	15 m	12 m	10 m	6 m	2 m	TOTAL QSO	TOTAL %
CW	12	2	115	1,048	1,866	1,169	1,441	1,015	1,315	139	0	8,122	61 %
FM	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.01 %
FT8	106	0	697	470	709	1,103	827	534	566	179	0	5,191	38.99 %
TOTAL QSO	118	2	812	1,518	2,575	2,272	2,268	1,549	1,881	318	1	13,314	100 %
TOTAL %	0.89 %	0.02 %	6.1 %	11.4 %	19.34 %	17.06 %	17.03 %	11.63 %	14.13 %	2.39 %	0.01 %	100 %	



It would be remiss of me not to mention two QSOs with our editor, Dick, N9EEE – the first I understand Dick was running 20W as a safety, but the second he was QRP to a wire antenna – great to finally get Dick in the log.

If you'd like to learn more about this truly unique Pacific Island, just pop Norfolk Island in your preferred search engine and follow the links. You'll find loads of interesting information on the history and life on the Island.

Next year? We're looking at another trip to VK9NT and possibly Lord Howe Island as well.

73, Chris, VK3QB

The Balkans by Coach

[Jim Talens](#), N3JT (CWops #1)

In early September, 2025, Nina and I traveled to the Balkans on a group tour by Gate1 Discovery Tours. This tour included Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Albania. Why would we choose to visit these Balkan countries? The answer is simply that we have been to most everywhere else on our bucket list and by the description this tour seemed intriguing, both for its cultural features and history. It is also a corner of the world little visited by Americans. A unique adjunct of our travels lies in my social contacts in virtually every country of the world through my amateur radio activity over the years. Even when we travel with an organized tour group, I can arrange personal visits with my ham radio friends. This adds enormously to the depth of the adventure and, frankly, is just plain fun because these people are like embedded family.

I had been throughout Bulgaria some 25 years ago as the guest of several ham radio friends, but I had not seen any of the sites featured on our tour itinerary. We had not been to Romania, North Macedonia, or Albania. We added a day onto the front of the tour to ease effects of the time change (6 hours) and to allow time to meet my radio friends; we also added a day to the back of the trip to let us to spend a full day with an Albanian radio friend.

One preliminary note: I rather like to be able to telephone friends while on a bus or in a street while touring new places, so I subscribed to T-Mobile's global data plan, which for \$50 gave us unlimited phone calls and more data than we would ever need. Experiences on these trips come in different forms and often unexpectedly, the phone calling plan no exception -- but more about that later.

Our tour group consisted of 15 people but we had a bus that seated at least 50 so we often spread out, especially on the longer drives between cities. In this travelogue I will share some of the highlights, both of the places themselves and of my radio friends, country by country.

Romania

East-west overseas travelers are divided into two camps, those who adjust easily going east and those who have no problem going west. The majority are in the latter group but I am in the former. Surprisingly, though, neither of us had much problem adjusting on arrival in Bucharest in the early afternoon so we were ready to roll after we freshened up in our hotel.

There were banners and flags announcing the George Enescu (famous Romanian musician and composer) music festival outside our InterContinental Athenaeum Palace hotel. It was a pan-European gathering of performers in Bucharest that month, focused on the Bucharest concert hall directly across the square from our hotel. Older European concert halls are lavishly adorned and always well worth visiting. At about 4 pm I called the concert hall to see if we could look inside. Formal tours were not available that day because of the festival but the attendant told me we could come over and get a quick look if we were there before 5:00 pm when the rehearsals for that evening would begin. In 2 minutes flat we were at the entrance, but confronted by 3 large guards who refused us entry. Dejected, we headed back to the hotel, but as we approached the elevator to return to our room a woman exited it carrying a violin case over her

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shoulder. I asked her if by chance she was headed to the concert hall - a shrewd insight, you surely would agree. She said she was because she was the featured soloist for the evening concert. I asked her name (Isabelle) and then asked if we might accompany her so we could see the inside of the hall. She readily agreed. As we approached the hall entry a group of fans gathered around her seeking a photograph. Apparently, our friend Isabelle is quite famous. With Isabelle leading the way, we waltzed by those 3 guards and saw the beautiful interior of the concert hall. Isabelle Faust happens to be a world-famous violinist. (As I compose this article we plan on seeing her perform in mid-October in Washington, DC. I will see if we can get backstage to say hi given we are such close friends.) Our short, unguided tour of the beautiful concert hall made the effort well worth it.

The next morning by prearrangement we met 3 of my ham radio friends outside our hotel, walked to the radio club facility about a mile away and chatted for quite a while. One of them, Adrian (YO3APJ), is a friend with whom I have been in contact for at least 30 years so it was great fun meeting him face to face. See Foto 1. We spent the rest of the day at several museums, including the National History Museum that has exquisite ancient artifacts, including a superb collection of beautiful gold jewelry from early Roman times. The synagogue of Bucharest is just gorgeous but Romania's record during the Holocaust is profoundly regrettable. See [The Holocaust in Romania - Wikipedia](#). After WW2, the country suffered under [Nicolae Ceaușescu](#), and his wife, [Elena Ceaușescu](#). Elena had only an elementary school education but later insisted she always be introduced publicly with all of her honorary titles. At the cost of economic stability, they spent untold billions in frivolous construction projects, including the massive parliament building that is second only to the Pentagon in interior floor space. It was never used and serves as a monument to the waste of the Ceaușescu regime. Both Nicolae and Elena were executed in December 1989 after a military trial that lasted just a few minutes.



Foto 1. Adrian is the fellow on the right. I am one of the other two. (The third is Nini, YO3CCC.)

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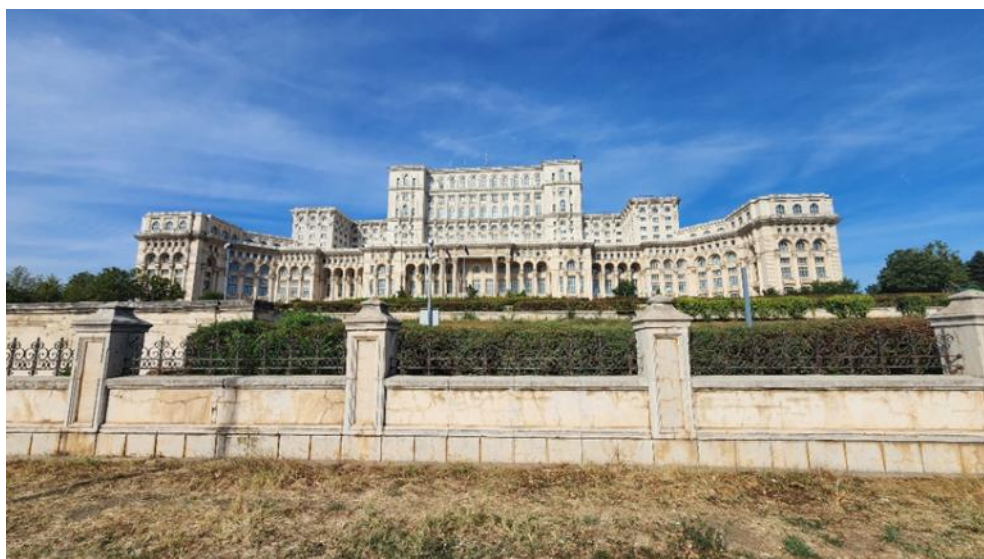
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That same evening our tour group gathered for orientation and introductions. Two of our fellow travelers were friends from Florida, Mitch and Carole, and our principal tour guide for this trip was Jelena (pronounced YELLana), from Croatia. She spent time in the United States so her English was excellent, and she had been a tour guide in this part of the world for many years. We knew we were in good hands, and the group overall was very compatible. In each town or at any major location, Gate1 provided a local guide who arranged entry where needed and provided detailed information abouts specific sites and history.

Our first full day with the group was, as most days, quite full. We started with a trip along the Prahova Valley and reached the mountain resort of Sinaia to see a monastery named after, you guessed it, St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai. Following that, we saw the Peles Castle, residence of Romania's first royal family. At this point I need to mention that nearly every meal was included in this tour, meaning 3 full meals daily. The breakfasts at the hotels were spectacular with virtually anything you can imagine. It is no surprise that we all tended to doze off enroute to the first destination after every breakfast. Really, none of us should have eaten again after breakfast, but the attraction of beautifully prepared salads and tasty main courses at lunch and dinner meant just one thing: a resolution to adhere to a diet on returning home. Meanwhile, we ate. Noteworthy to me were the salads because they always featured tasty tomatoes, very much unlike what we typically get at our groceries. I shy away from mammal meats (pork, beef, lamb, etc.) and steer toward chicken and fish choices. There were always such options.

The next day featured a bus tour of monuments and buildings, including Bucharest's Arch of Triumph, a replica of the Paris version, commemorating WW1 soldiers. While Romania was allied with Germany during WW2 (in order regain territory lost earlier but promised to it by the Nazis), in 1944 it switched sides in support of the Allies. This is somewhat of an oversimplification because all the neighboring countries were vying for territory and Romania was caught in the middle. See [Romania during World War II | WarWiki | Fandom](#) The rest of that day we were treated to great architecture: National Museum, Cantacuzino Palace (Art Nouveau style), Revolution Square (celebrating the overthrow of the last Communist leader in Eastern Europe), and many others. See Foto 3. We then toured the Palace of Parliament, noted above (see Foto 2), and finally Village Museum, an outdoors showcase of traditional Romanian village thatched homes, barns, and churches.

Foto 2. The unused, \$4-billion parliament building in Bucharest.



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Foto 3. There is great controversy over this statue of King Carol 1 because there is only one time a horse's tail is up in the air like this, and it is not when it is pleased to see you.



The evening culminated in a lecture by a man who participated in the revolution of 1989, his best friend killed next to him, and how they organized against police and mechanized personnel vehicles. It was quite a stirring first-hand presentation. See Foto 4.

Foto 4. The speaker who participated in the revolution of 1989 and survived! (The other one is Nina.)



We now move on to the second stop of our trip, Bulgaria.

Bulgaria

Our first stop in Bulgaria was Veliko Tarnovo (City of the Tsars) with its reconstructed medieval fortress and remains of some 400 houses from the period, unique architecture, and early Bulgarian history (with first settlement some 5,000 years ago).

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Notwithstanding all of this, though, Foto 5 shows what for me will always remain an indelible vision: a store dedicated solely to baklava! I was physically dragged away after taking the photo else I would still be there in a diabetic coma.

Foto 5. What a horrible place. It sells only baklava.



We then went on to nearby Arbanassi, which features 17th and 18th century Bulgarian National Revival architecture. Later, we were entertained by a choir (6 men) from Holy Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church. The entire area we visited was largely ruled by the Turks (Ottoman Empire) for over 400 years, so there are cultural, architectural and language influences evident. We then headed to Plovdiv, but instead of joining our tour group for dinner we met with several of my ham radio friends, who took me to a huge club radio station (with Nina enjoying the company of the friends' wives at a local restaurant called Hemingway's, where we all ate dinner later.) See Fotos 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Plovdiv is a lovely city with Neolithic history (7,000 years of it), later a Thracian center, and then formally founded as a city by Alexander the Great's father. Among other things, he built a large amphitheater in Plovdiv that is one of the best preserved in Europe. This city has been the crossroads of a long list of cultures over the centuries.

Foto 6. Ham radio guys: Boyko, Jim, and Gosh (LZ1ZF, N3JT, LZ1QN).



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Foto 7. Gathering of ham radio group. Can you spot Boyko and Gosho? The young guy at the far left is LU9ESD (Argentine), Mannu, who maintains the big club station (LZ5R).

Foto 8. Clever menu from a fine restaurant!

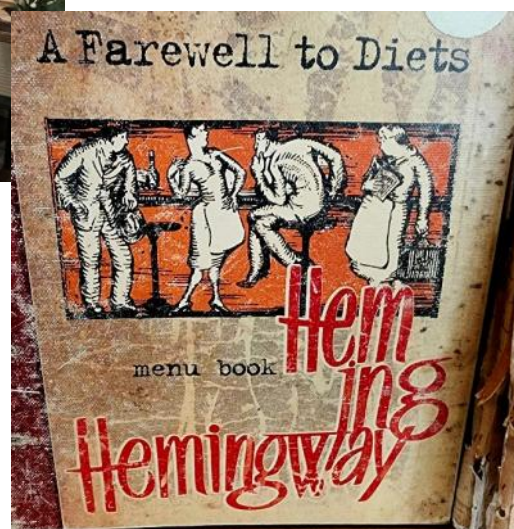


Foto 10. This LZ5R club station has multiple towers, this one some 150 feet tall.



Foto 9. Jim using the LZ5R club station.

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We next moved on to Sofia, the capital. It is characterized by Ottoman domes along the skyline, but we headed to the National History Museum with exhibits of artifacts going back 8,000 years and a series of gold and silver hoards from Thracian times. We visited St Sofia Church and the nearby neo-Byzantine golden-domed Alexandr Nevsky Church, one of the largest Eastern Orthodox cathedrals in the world. Next, we viewed the 4th century Roman Rotunda, a red brick building transformed into today's St George Church and St Joseph's Cathedral. But once again we left our tour group that evening to visit a good friend I have known for 35 years. In fact, I visited him during my long trip through Bulgaria in 1999. Neither of us has changed a bit, of course. I also operated Rumen's ham radio station (LZ1MS) while Nina and Elena (Rumen's wife) chatted. See Fotos 11 and 12.



Foto 11. Nina, Jim and Rumen in Sofia.



Foto 12. Jim at Rumen's station.



Foto 13. Rumen, Rumen's wife (Elena), Jim, and Nina.

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The next morning, our tour group headed off to see Rila Monastery, long considered a center of literacy and religion in Bulgaria that served to preserve Bulgarian culture and language during “visits” of other cultures over the centuries. There were beautiful frescoes and a museum (where we could not take pictures). But now it was time to move on to Skopje, capital of North Macedonia.

North Macedonia

What is now known as the Republic of North Macedonia was part of Bulgaria during WW2 until 1945 when Communism took hold. Then it came under Tito’s Yugoslavia until its secession in 1991. There was a dispute with Greece over the name but in 2019 that was resolved in favor of the current name.

We began our first full day in Skopje (pronounced skope-yih) with a visit to a very well designed and implemented Holocaust Museum, dedicated in 2019. No photos were allowed inside but we could take them at the entrance. See Fotos 14, 15 and 16. I should note here that the design of the exhibit space was by the same architects who designed the Washington, DC Holocaust Museum display areas (Berenbaum Jacobs Associates). The 8,000 Jews of Macedonia in 1941 were removed by Bulgaria (then allied with Germany) and never returned. There are some 200 in Skopje today.



Foto 14. The Skopje Holocaust Museum

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Foto 15. Outside the Holocaust Museum.



Foto 16. Inside entry to Skopje Holocaust Museum

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We then explored the old town section of Skopje, stopping at Macedonia Square, Porta Macedonia, the 15th century Turkish stone bridge and the 6th century Byzantine fortress. We also saw the house in which Mother Teresa was born (1910). Skopje has a huge number of statues, some 400 or more, we are told. Most are historic figures, but some are whimsical. The Macedonia Square is full of them. The commanding one in the center is of Alexander the Great, but around the square are statues of his father, mother, and siblings. Both Alexander and his father were born in Pella, Greece, which is not far away. See Foto 17. Not all the statuary is military or political. See Foto 18.



Foto 17. Alexander the Great



Foto 18. Girls frozen in time shopping.

That first full day brought more radio fun because I was able to meet a guy I had contacted by radio multiple times but of course had never met personally. His name is Misop (Z31PM), a professor of theater arts. He and Vlado (Z35M) set up a portable station in a public park so I could make some radio contacts, though at only 10 watts of power I was not sure how far I might reach. The station consisted of a whip antenna poked in the ground, picnic table, and the radio



(with headphones and Morse paddle). Those 10 watts enabled me to make 100 contacts throughout Europe in just an hour or so. (Radio propagation did not extend just then to North America.) This ham station was quite the opposite in terms of size and power of the station in Plovdiv, but it was as much fun. See Fotos 19 and 20.

Foto 19. Vlado (Z35M), Jim (N3JT), and Misop (Z31PM)

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Foto 20. Vlado, Jim and Nina. As you can see, Nina is thrilled with all this.



The evening before, our tour group ate at a lovely restaurant in Skopje. As we left the restaurant I noticed an odd display of old transmitting tubes. Nobody at the restaurant had any idea why they were collected or where they came from! See Foto 21.

Foto 21. Display of transmitting tubes in a restaurant in Skopje.

The next morning, we headed to the ancient Roman city of Stobi. The city dates from the 3rd century BCE but has ruins through the medieval period. Interestingly, there was a synagogue in Stobi dating to the 2nd century CE that may have served as a model for future synagogues. Rooms for it were donated by Tiberius Claudius Polycharmos (quite a surname!). See Foto 22. Stobi ruins



cover the green areas beyond the view of Foto 21, toward the right and into the adjoining hill area. Only a small part of Stobi has been excavated.



Foto 22. Location of 2nd century synagogue at Stobi.

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Stobi was a crossroads for trade and was a highly developed city until a massive earthquake in 518 CE destroyed it.

After Stobi, we visited a winery. North Macedonia produces a lot of good wines. The grapes used are of multiple known varieties, but some are unique to the area, like Vranec. I tasted the Vranec grapes themselves and they were delicious, both purple and white, but the wines of course are a far cry from sweet. Speaking of wine and spirits, Rakia is a 40% alcohol drink made typically from fermented plums that is produced and consumed throughout the Balkans. They like it. I do not.

We then moved on to Ohrid, arriving late in the afternoon. Ohrid features a very lovely lake, and a medieval castle. I will remember it especially for the swimming pool at our Hotel Unique. It was longer than an Olympic size pool and had no lane markers, perhaps because it is for casual wading and the like. But the water was cold and it was only because I wanted to do at least one swim for the week that I jumped in. It took 3 days for me to thaw, but I did my mile.

The next day, young rowers paddled us in large canoes (one rower and 8 of us in each canoe) along a small lake fed by underground springs that you can see bubbling up from the sand in the crystal-clear water. This is the main source of water for the vastly larger Lake Ohrid.

We then rode by bus to the Bay of Bones along the Gradiste Peninsula (15 km from Ohrid) where a pre-historic pile dwelling community existed just off the edge of the lake. Access was by walkways for protection against invaders and animals. The buildings and walkways have been reconstructed and the complex, including a museum, is a major area attraction. See Foto 23 and unrelated Foto 24.



Foto 23. Bay of Bones, near Ohrid, featuring reconstructed ancient huts and meeting rooms.



Foto 24. We could not resist! Ohrid is spelled in Cyrillic letters, of course.

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Next, we visited Naum Monastery, with its priceless icons and religious paintings, the old town section of Ohrid, the National Museum, Church of St Sophia, Roman amphitheater, and Tsar Samoil's fortress. There is such complex history in every corner of these places it is difficult to even remember the basics, though at times it seems some names pop up frequently. Samoil, for example, was a Bulgarian hero from the 11th century but his name appears repeatedly because the boundaries of these countries changed over time. American history is much easier to follow and remember. I feel for young history students in these countries!

The rest of the day we had at our leisure. Five of us tended to hang out together and it was time for a late lunch. On our guide's recommendation, we had lunch at a pizza restaurant. It was very good though soon after we all agreed we could use a nap! Perish the thought, because we soon had to meet our other tour group companions for our scheduled boat cruise on Lake Ohrid. See Foto 25. After the beautiful cruise we visited another winery where a lovely dinner was served. Every evening meal included wine, but I seemed to hone in on the salads. In fact, I traded with one of our group - my wine for her salad! I succeeded in proving that you can gain weight if you consume enough salad! Now on to our last stop, Albania.



Foto 25. This is but one of many amazing views during our hour-long cruise on Lake Ohrid, one of Nina's favorite places of our trip.

Albania

In order to meet some of my ham radio friends we extended our overall trip by one day, much as we had done at the outset for Romania. Our first stop on leaving Ohrid in North Macedonia was Elbasan (from Ottoman-Turkish, meaning the fortress) and of course we saw Roman ruins and a medieval Ottoman fortress. See Foto 26. Then we headed to Tirana, the capital of Albania.

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Foto 26.

Ottoman fortress in Elbasan



In the Tirana central square, there is a statue of Gjergj Skanderbeg, a hero in this country from the 15th century. He was sent as a hostage to the Ottoman court and spent 20 years rising in the military hierarchy until he fled to start an uprising that led to independence of the area from the Ottomans. This would make a great Netflix movie.

We toured more of the city center, generally characterized by highly creative tall buildings built over the last decade or so. From there we went to an olive tasting at a shop in the Toptani Fortress (Tirana Castle). Every country thinks its olive oil is the best because of its unique growing conditions, and each has a subtle variety of flavors. What was most interesting to me here was that after the wine tasting we were not even encouraged to buy their olive oil. So what was the purpose of the tastings and the detailed oil quality pitch? We saw the same thing at the wineries. They fed us and gave us wine samples, but they never even mentioned buying wine despite it being available for sale. Nobody I asked seem to have a reason for this profoundly low-pressure sales approach, but I think it will change in time as they learn western sales techniques.

We spent considerable time walking past impressive buildings, including the Mosque of Et'hem Bey, built in the late 18th century but closed until 1991 when Communism collapsed. Albania was overrun in 1939 by Fascist Italian forces and was later occupied by the Nazis. In 1944 it was liberated but in 1946 became a one-party Communist Stalinist state. Enver Hoxha reigned over Albania from 1945 until he died in 1989. He was quite horrible to the people of Albania, forbidding any religious worship, limiting food intake, and of course insulating his country from outside influence, including amateur radio. If someone was caught with a bible, for example, the owner of the bible and the whole family would be summarily executed. It seems he was moral kin to Kim Jong Un of North Korea, but maybe even worse. Listening to a western program on a radio meant death. After 1989, things remained Communist but less extreme. Cars were finally appearing on the streets, and highways were constructed. People did not really know how to drive so there were constant collisions until they were better trained. Today, from personal experience I can report that Tirana is a very car-congested city, but the curious feature is that people cut in front of each other to gain a half car length yet nobody gets angry or even honks the horn. Eventually the traffic moves but it is tortuous if you are expecting to get somewhere on time.

Now is a good time to note a problem I had with my overseas telephone calls. As mentioned earlier, I had purchased a T-Mobile international calling plan for \$50 that included unlimited tele-

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phone calls to the United States. But from North Macedonia and Albania often after two rings I would get a recording instructing me to leave a message. I did that repeatedly but never received a response. Where did those messages go? Alternatively, the call when dialed would instantly disconnect. Usually, the solution was to use the hotel's Wifi for calling when I was at our hotel, but I paid for not having to do that. Chatting with a T-Mobile representative back home from our hotel room in Tirana led her to do some kind of system reset, which disabled all texting, WhatsApp, and Internet access for about 20 minutes. She had to call me repeatedly to connect, demonstrating that there was indeed a problem. When I got home, I wrote to T-Mobile and spoke at length to an executive team member. No explanation. Maybe the network engineers understand what was going on, but it was not worth digging into the matter more deeply. T-Mobile gave me a partial refund of the \$50, but one should be aware of this kind of problem in countries that are just coming into modern times. It probably is the same with other carriers.

Back to Tirana. There are two huge underground bunkers in central Tirana built during Communist times in the event of atomic warfare. We went into the smaller one, which is quite huge. The larger one supposedly could accommodate most of the residents of the city. In one of the maybe 100 rooms underground there is a display with the names of 5,500 people killed at some point by Hoxha. The curious aspect is that the music being softly played sounded much like the Kol Nidre chant of Yom Kippur. See Foto 27.

Foto 27. Part of display in the Tirana bunker referring to the driving conditions!

On our final day with our tour group, we visited Kruje, Skanderbeg's hometown where 500 years earlier he defended the town from the Ottomans. We visited the Ethnographic Museum, saw a typical 18th century Ottoman house owned by a wealthy merchant, and wandered through the narrow streets looking at souvenirs and handicrafts, none of which we bought. Well, we bought two refrigerator magnets for friends but nothing more. By the time we returned to our hotel it was nearly time for dinner, our final dinner with this lovely group of people with whom we had spent two weeks enjoying history, architecture, natural beauty, and fine meals. See Foto 28.



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Foto 28. Our Gate1 group at our final dinner together. Note the clean plates! (Of course, the foto was taken before everybody would be distracted by eating and chatter.) Our tour guide, Jelena, is at the far end.

My ham radio friend Miri (radio call sign ZA1RR) and his son Julio (spelled Xhulio in Albanian) arrived late that evening to meet us, chat a bit and plan the next day. Miri speaks no English but Julio, age 19, is quite fluent, as are most younger people in Albania. I had brought a replacement part for Miri's transmitter, something he could never arrange to purchase himself, and an ARRL Handbook. I always bring something for these guys, and I did the same in Romania and North Macedonia. No doubt you are wondering how we could have become friends on the radio if Miri does not speak English and I know no Albanian. The answer is that there are certain phrases like the signal report, name, location, equipment, weather, holiday wishes, etc., that are conducted universally in English. Some limited exchange beyond that is usually possible with simple statements. But there is also the contest mode, meaning that making repeated contact exchanges with a particular operator during international competitions builds a kind of bond. It is the combination of these two that allowed Miri and me to become friends. In the other countries, English is spoken well enough by most ham radio operators.

The next day we headed to Berat, Miri's birthplace, about 40 miles south of Tirana. On the way we picked up another ham radio operator named Fatos (ZA1F). Fatos speaks a little English but Julio still served as translator deluxe. Berat is a lovely mountain town with a spectacular view of the surrounding valley and Osum River. See Foto 29. The town started as an Illyrian settlement (from which Albanian gets its language, though influenced by Greek, Slovak and other tongues) in the 7th century BCE, with later Greek incursions in the 4th century BCE. Berat has a unique style of [architecture](#), and like many cities in Albania, it consists of an old fortified city filled with churches and mosques painted with [murals](#) and [frescos](#). We spent several hours exploring Berat but then headed to a restaurant some miles away in the mountains for lunch. Before we left, though, Miri bought me a Dervish cap with the Albanian national symbol on it. See Fotos 30 and 31. Bektashism is a Sufi (Dervish) order of Islam in this area.

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Fotos 30 and 31. Gifts from our Albanian friends (shirt, cap, wine).

I do not fully understand how a fully organic restaurant like Restorant Roshniku can survive in such an isolated kind of place, but they have been in business for some ten years. We were among only a small handful of other patrons. The meal, consisting of a variety of meats, chicken, and vegetables, with wine, was one of the best of the entire trip. See Foto 32.



Foto 32. Restorant Roshniku, in the mountains at Berat. I would be there every week were it 4860 miles closer.

To get me on the air, Miri's planned to string a wire from the elevated seating area of the restaurant to a pole across the street, use a small battery powered transmitter (much like the one in Skopje), but to his horror Miri discovered he left the small transmitter at home. We packed everything up and headed back to his house where I could operate his home station for the short time we had before a radio club meeting close to his apartment in Tirana. I mentioned the traffic situ-

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ation earlier, and I will forever remember the massive number of small cars (with the occasional SUV or truck) moving stop and go on the highway. It took close to two hours to reach Miri's apartment, including the slight detour to drop Fatos off at his place. The view from Miri's apartment is impressive, I thought, reminding me of Manhattan. See Foto 33. Miri's wife Ada surprised us with beverages and baklava. But this was no ordinary baklava because it came in a huge round pan, presumably from a nearby bakery, and included chocolate. It was the best baklava I have ever eaten. After that, I headed to Miri's radio shack and operated for about 20 minutes, all the time we had because we were already late for a gathering of the local ham radio people at a local outdoor restaurant. See Fotos 34 and 35.

Foto 33. View from Miri's apartment.



Foto 34. Miri and me in his radio shack.

The meeting was quite informal but included several people I had spoken with many times by radio, including Elvira (ZA1EM) from Elbasan, who is pictured in Foto 35.

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Foto 35. This is the ham radio group meeting over drinks, organized to greet Nina and me. Elvira (ZA1EM) is 5th from the right. Miri (ZA1RR) is second on the left.

Our final dinner in Albania followed the group meeting and included Miri's son Fabian (Fabiani in Albania) and his girlfriend Elda, and Miri's wife Ada. It was a lovely final social event to cap our visit to the Balkans. See Foto. 36.



Foto 36. This is our final dinner in the Balkans. Left to right are Ada (Miri's wife), Elda (Fabian's girlfriend), Fabian (Miri's son), Nina, Jim, and Miri.

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I have one final foto to share and it is of the Frankfurt, Germany area as we approached on our flight from Tirana. I do not normally bother taking fotos through airplane windows but this was an unusually clear day and the view striking. Foto 37.



Foto 37. A view of Frankfurt as we approached the airport.

I hope you have found this summary of our Balkans trip worthwhile. We have over 1,000 fotos in each of our smartphones that record so many sites and people, and even videos of unique cultural exhibits and artistic performances. It was a remarkable experience in learning about a part of the world overlooked but important in terms of world history, cultural evolution, and social change. Oh, and if you decide to take Gate1 for this Balkans tour (or any other of their tours) please mention my name. I think I get a free pizza, or maybe baklava.

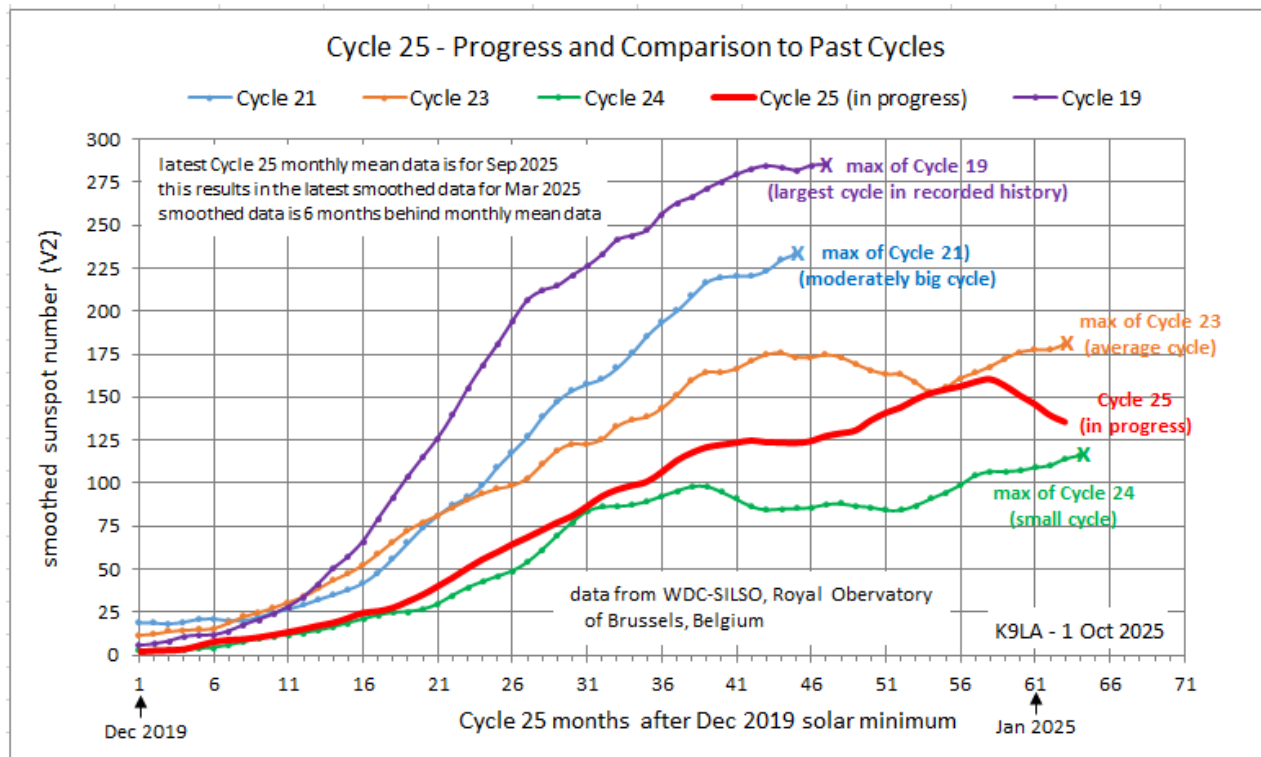


Cycle 25 Update

Carl Luetzelschwab, K9LA (CWops #920)

In the January 2024 edition of *Solid Copy*, I gave an update on Cycle 25. At that time we had 43 months of smoothed sunspot number data, and Cycle 25 had just passed the small Cycle 24. As a reminder, Cycle 24 was the smallest in our lifetimes and is the fourth smallest in recorded history.

We now have 63 months (a bit more than five years) of smoothed sunspot number data for Cycle 25. Here's the latest data on Cycle 25 (the thick red curve), along with Cycle 24, Cycle 23, Cycle 21 and Cycle 19.



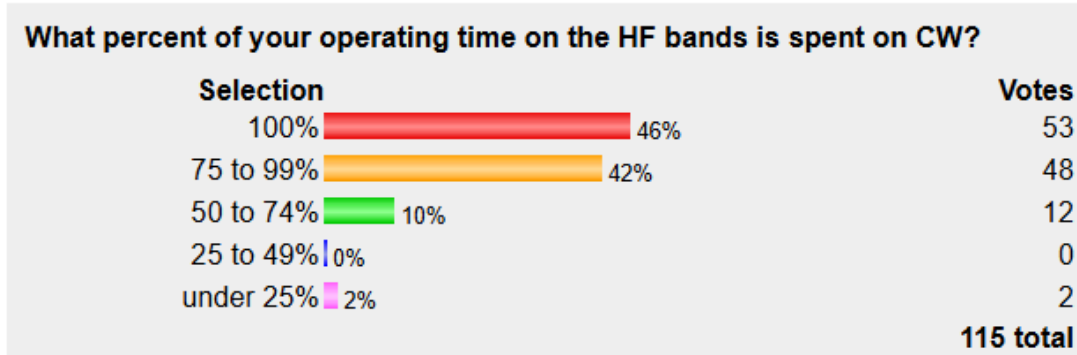
For the past five months, Cycle 25 has been declining. Cycle 25 is either in its true decline or it's just undergoing a pause before giving us a second peak. For some very interesting data, visit <https://www.solen.info/solar/>. Sunspots and 10.7 cm solar flux have been declining for more than a year, but in mid-2025 sunspots and 10.7 solar flux hit bottom and appear to be increasing a bit. It will be interesting to see what happens in the next 6 to 12 months.

Even if Cycle 25 is in its true decline, we still have at least a year before the smoothed sunspot number drops below the value needed for daily 10m openings. Thus we should expect great worldwide propagation on our higher HF bands (15m, 12m, and 10m) in the fall and winter months of 2025 and 2026 – and maybe even into the early months of 2027.

As for the lower HF bands (160m, 80m, 40m), propagation should improve a bit in the fall and winter months due to slowly approaching solar minimum (around 2030 or 2031). But this has to be tempered with the fact that our society is more and more electronic in nature, which results in higher values of man-made noise. More on this in a future CWops newsletter.

Keyed Up

September Poll



October Poll

“What is your strategy to maximize QSOs in the CWTs?”

Take the poll: <https://cwops.org/keyed-up/>. Leave a comment. Check results in next month's *Solid Copy*

— **sc** —

Hamming It Up



New Members

[Trung Nguyen, W6TN](#)

With great pleasure we welcome the following new members to CWops:

<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>CWops</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Name</u>
3789	KQ2M	Bob	3793	N8JMS*	Justin	3797	AC6NT*	Eric
3790	DJ1TF*	Tom	3794	KG5WAW*	Jim	3798	K7GK	Denis
3791	RUØLL	Ulrich	3795	MMØDGI*	Steven	3799	KA6W*	Ted
3792	MØDXR	Mark	3796	IT9GSF*	Fabio			

* Lifetime member

As of October 7, 2025:

Need Sponsors:

Invitations Extended:

For more details about nominees and up-to-date status, check the ["Members only"](#) page on the website. For information about joining CWops, check the ["Membership"](#) page on the website.

Notes: If you have updated your personal info, e.g., new QTH, new callsign, or additional callsign, please send it to membership@cwops.org so I can add it to the roster. Vice versa, if your callsign becomes inactive I can remove it, too. Then the roster will be accurate and current for our usage.

73, Trung W6TN (CWops #1707), Membership Manager

Did your **CALL SIGN** change recently?

Did you move to a **NEW ADDRESS** or change your **NAME** ?

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Help us keep our **DATABASE UP-TO-DATE**

Click [HERE](#) to update your contact information.



Giving Back Update

[Rob Brownstein](#), **K6RB** (CWops #3)

CWops' Giving Back (GB) program is meant to provide on-air QSO experience and practice for anyone who wants it. It was initially intended as a way for our CW Academy students to get some on-air experience. We all know that when there is activity on the bands, these days, it's usually a DXpedition pileup or a contest. Today's CW aspirants have had little chance to work others who are skilled at CW, operate at moderate speed, and are committed to helping. That's the mission of Giving Back. The GB volunteers get on the air at approximately 7 pm local time and seek out CQers, or call CQ, and engage in routine QSOs including some conversational tidbits. The operators' schedule appears on the next page.

Here are the September 2025 results (GB hosts are shown in **bold**):

GW2CWO	G4OAB EU1TN GW4ZVL	PA1SJP IZ1KFE IU4RJD	DL2XU G3MCK	RA3LDP G4GJV	F8FXA MMØNJC	G3ZRN IK1ZYO	IT9IWU G4NNJ
JG1UQD	JJØSFV JG3QHX	J11CJJ JA3RDU	JQ3DIM	JQ3FRX	JKØKSB	J16MDA	JL2SQK
JJ1FXF	J11CJJ BG4IPP DSØRES	JA4IJJ(2) HL1MIM VK7TA	DS3QVS(2) JJØXEQ	JJØSFV JN3CEL	BH3OQQ BG4LFS	JF7URV JS1TVB	D9ØYG JH2HTQ
JK1QYL	JG1BGT(3) JM1MKH(2) JS2OVO	JK7JAF(2) JS1QIZ JH2HTQ	JE2OUK JE6AJO JS1QIZ/1	JR2WYB JJØXEQ JE1GSD	JQ3DIM N6TI JF1LXO	JA4IJJ(2) HL5JZ JE6TVQ	JE1FMZ JN1FAO
JM4AOA	DS2SDS JQ3FRX	HL1MIM N6TI	JA1EFS	JA6BZH	JE2OUK	JH2URW	JH4PVW
JO1DGE	8J1ITA JF1LXO JJØXEQ JR6SBI VK7TA	BH3OQQ JF3AUB JK1WCW(2) JS2KNN	DS3QVS(2) JG1BGT(5) JK8NVU JS2KZM	JA1EFS JH2HTQ JN1FAO JS6THD	JA6BZH JH5YCW/1 JN3QQT KE7LOY	JA7KED JJØPFZ JQ3FRX(2) N7JM	JE2OUK JJØSFV JR3WAS VK6NC
K7NJ	W7CPP WB2UJS	WØUFC NØFIH	KO6KRP W5PB	OE5KE WU7F	WQØA WP3Y	KX9F	KD5KKI
MØWDD	DH7AMF M7GNO	F4HFJ MMØNJC	G4GJV PE1MYH/P	HB9GSD SM5BOH	MØISZ	MØIYP	MØTJU
W5DT	KJ7RMJ	AE8EA	K4EWG (2)	KC1WZG	VE3/4Z5AX	KG4KGL	W2YRL
7J1ATG	JA6BZH JR3RHI	JF2EVE	JG1BGT	JJØXEQ	7L2VPL	7N2XZB	JA7KED
7L2VPL	JM1MKH JJØXEQ JQ3FRX	JA4IJJ JF3TBK	JA4IJJ JL2SQK	W7QQQ HL1IWD	JR3RHI BD3OIT	7J1ATG/2 B11XJT	JJØSFV JG1BGT
7N2XZB	HL1MIM(2) JN3QQT	N6TTV JE1FMZ	JE2OUK DS2SDS	JK1PWT(2) JK1WCW	JJØSFV	JE3AIE	JN1MET

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Giving Back Operating Schedule - 7 PM Local												
October - April: 40m & 80m May - September: 40m & 20m												
Frequencies: 7.035 - 7.039, 3.535 - 3.539, 14.035 - 14.039 MHz JA - 7.028 +/-												
UTC+10	UTC+9	UTC+7	UTC+3	UTC+2	UTC+1	UTC/BST	UTC-1	New York UTC-4	Chicago UTC-5	Denver UTC-6	Los Angeles UTC-7	Hawaii UTC-10
MON												
VK1CWO	JØ1DGE							W2XS				
	JG1GBT											
TUE												
	JR1WYW	E25JRP		SV2BBK		GW2CWO		WE5P	K8UDH	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	7N2XZB								W8OV			
WED												
	7J1ATG							N8DD				
THURS												
	7N2XZB			SV2BBK				KV8Q	N5OT	K7NJ	W7ZDX	
	JG1BGT							W7IY				
FRI												
	JK1QYL			SV2BBK		GW2CWO		N2GSL	AAØYY		K6RB	
						MØWDD						
SAT												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	JG1UQD											
SUN												
	JJ1FXF							W5DT				
	JM4AOA											
	7L1VPL											



CW Academy

[Bob Carter](#), WR7Q and [Roland Smith](#), K7OJL

Contesting: A Passion Among CW Operators



Contesting is a cherished activity among CW operators. However, CW Academy students, as they learn and enhance their CW skills, often harbor reservations about participating in contests. While many aspire to try their hand in the future, they hesitate to even try at present.

MorseRunner (Community Edition) emerges as an exceptional contest trainer, providing students with a practical and realistic experience that equips them for contest participation. However, a crucial aspect missing is the logging process, specifically N1MM+.

N1MM+ offers seamless integration with MorseRunner, transforming it into a comprehensive contest trainer. Here's how I set up my students for N1MM+ to operate in MorseRunner mode:

1. Installation and Configuration: Begin by downloading and installing N1MM+ from <https://n1mmwp.hamdocs.com>, utilizing the default database. Subsequently, proceed to configure the station information by navigating to "Config → Change your station data." Enable the "Config → Enter sends message" option.
2. Training Setup: For training purposes, refrain from configuring N1MM+ for your radio until you are prepared to transmit.
3. Separating Training Contacts: To maintain a distinction between training contacts and all other N1MM+ contacts, utilize a separate database for training and create a new log for each training session.

Initially, if this is the setup, proceed as follows:

- * Creating a Morserunner Database: Click on "File → New Database" and create a Morserunner database.
- * Setting Up a New Log: In the Morserunner database, create a new log by selecting "File → New Log in Database morserunner.s3db."
- * Log Type Selection: Choose "CQWW/CW" as the Log Type.
- * Completing Contest Information: Complete the remaining contest-related details.

Access the "Config" menu and select "Configure Ports, Mode Control, Winkey, etc... → Other."

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Check the “MorseRunner Mode” option box. Upon initial activation, N1MM+ will download a specialized MorseRunner release and initiate its installation.

Subsequently, N1MM+ will display a window titled “MorseRunner Setup.” This window allows the customization of band conditions, Activity Level, Duration, Sidetone, CQ Message, and TU Message. By clicking “Start MorseRunner,” the training session commences.

The student proceeds by selecting “Run,” transmitting a CQ (F1) and waits for a response. The training session is now underway.

Upon reaching the specified duration or upon the student’s decision to close N1MM+, the program prompts for a reset of MorseRunner. This feature enables the student to initiate and execute another training session, should they desire.

Operating N1MM+ in MorseRunner mode presents an exceptional training setup for contest-related activities. We encourage you to experiment with this setup and share your feedback with us.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments please contact either Bob Carter WR7Q (kcgator@gmail.com) or Roland Smith K7OJL (rolandksmith@gmail.com)

73, Roland K7OJL

CWA Admin

SC

CW Academy

Session Dates

January / February

May / June

September / October

Learning Levels

Beginner

Fundamental

Intermediate

Advanced



CWops Tests (CWTs)

[Rich Ferch](#), VE3KI

One of the less enjoyable aspects of managing the CWTs is being the target of complaints, as the event's visible representative. At one time, these were often general complaints about the CWTs taking over too much of the band, to which it was at least possible to respond with some reasoned arguments. More recently, though, the complaints have increasingly been reports of CWT participants stomping on QSOs in progress, especially during the few minutes immediately preceding a CWT. These are harder to respond to – it's hard to defend the indefensible.

It should go without saying that we do not have an automatic entitlement to the frequencies we use. Others pursuing different aspects of the hobby have just as much right to use the bands as we do, and to expect not to have their ongoing contacts willfully interfered with. Someone using a QRP rig from a park bench to make QSOs for POTA has just as much right to do that as we do to chase contest-style QSOs in a CWT.

The tactic of picking a frequency and starting to call CQ without first asking if the frequency is in use is not really appropriate at any time. However, it is possible that in the middle of a major contest it might arguably be at least a somewhat effective tactic (especially if you are so loud that you usually win out in the frequency fight if one ensues), and like driving 60 mph in a 50 mph zone, perhaps it's the kind of thing you can get away with without drawing too much attention. But on a weekday, on what was until a few minutes earlier a relatively quiet band, it's likely to be noticed, and not favorably.

It's not as if we are performing socially significant communications. In personal rather than social terms, the only awards or certificates for the CWTs are participation awards for which the only requirement is making 10 QSOs. If you're a serious enough contender to give the offending tactic even passing consideration, you will make those 10 QSOs in a handful of minutes, long before the hour is up. Even if your personal goal is 50, 60, 100 or 200 QSOs in a CWT, the QSOs someone is trying to make for a POTA park activation are probably just as important to them as those CWT QSOs are to you.

So, before calling CQ on a new frequency, and especially before starting to warm up a frequency before a CWT or during the first few minutes, please listen first. Listen for a reasonable time (measured in seconds, not milliseconds!), and listen for weak and slow signals. Ask if the frequency is in use (QRL?, not just a couple of dits), and please wait for a reasonable time for an answer. If there is someone there, they might not be on a hair-trigger alert ready to respond to an interruption, and it might take them a while to decide how to respond. Halfway through a CWT, it's probably not unreasonable to assume that someone else on the frequency is in contest mode, but before the CWT has started or during the first minute or so, that's not a foregone conclusion.

The CWTs are major contributors to the face of CWops as seen by the rest of the amateur community. Let's please do our best to avoid making that impression a black eye.

Enjoy the CWTs and keep those reported scores coming!

73, Rich VE3KI (CWops #783)
CWT Manager



CWops Member Awards

[Bill Gilliland, WØTG](#)



Monthly Update

During September, five additional members submitted logs and the number of active participants in the awards program is currently 230.

The **ACA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of Sep 2025 have **KR2Q** in first place and leading second place **KY4GS** by 211 QSOs. The top ten ACA totals this month are: **(1) KR2Q, (2) KY4GS, (3) AA3B, (4) N5RZ, (5) K3WW, (6) N5TJ, (7) KC7V (8) KO4VW, (9) OM2VL** and **(10) NA8V**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 550 QSOs.

The **ACMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of Sep 2025 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **KR2Q** by 309 QSOs. The top ten ACMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) KR2Q, (3) N5RZ, (4) K3WW, (5) KY4GS, (6) OM2VL, (7) NA8V, (8) N5TJ, (9) KC7V** and **(10) K7QA**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 1889 QSOs.

The **CMA** QSO totals and rankings for the end of Sep 2025 have **AA3B** in first place and leading second place **K3WW** by 3509 QSOs. The top ten CMA totals this month are: **(1) AA3B, (2) K3WW, (3) N5RZ, (4) KR2Q, (5) N5ZO, (6) DL6KVA, (7) NA8V, (8) W1RM, (9) F6HKA** and **(10) AD5A**. The separation between first place and tenth place is 6720 QSOs.

The number of participants who have contacted CWops members in 100 or more **DXCC** entities grew to **96** this month with the addition of **EA6BF**.

The number of participants who have accomplished CWops **WAS** remained at **273** this month.

You can see complete rankings for all award categories at <https://cwops.telegraphy.de/scores>.

CWops Award Tools Participation

At the end of 2024 we had 280 active participants in the Member Awards Program. As of Oct 1, 2025, we have 230 active participants. If you have not yet submitted any logs for 2025, please do so soon, and we can include your score among the participants.

The Top 100 and the Searchable and Sortable Scores Table show rankings and scores for active participants only. To be an active participant and be included in awards scoring including the ACA, ACMA and CMA competitions, you must have submitted a log during the current year. To see rankings and scores for both active and inactive participants please use the Score Overview Table where inactive participants are listed with ACA and ACMA scores of zero, but their scores in other categories are listed at the highest level that was previously submitted.

You can see the final 2024 scores or final scores for any other year by going to the Score Overview Table and selecting the desired year from the "Final scores:" list at the top of the page.

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All scores categories on the page will then show the final scores and standings for the end of the selected year.

The Searchable and Sortable Table can graph your current year's ACA scores by date and allows you to compare your progression to that of others. Check the Plot button for the calls you wish to see plotted and they will all appear on the same graph.

The CWops Award Tools website main page provides a means of printing your CWT Participation Certificate. You may request a downloadable certificate by clicking the "CWT certificate download" selection at the top of the page. For more information about CWT Participation Awards, please go to <https://cwops.org/cwops-tests/>.

CWops Member Awards Program Overview

Several operating awards are available for contacting CWops members. These include **Annual Competition Award (ACA)** recognizing the total number of CWops members contacted during the current year, **Annual Cumulative Membership Award (ACMA)** counting QSOs with members on all bands (once per band) during the current year, **Cumulative Membership Award (CMA)** counting QSOs with members on all bands (once per band) since January 3, 2010, **CWops WAS** award for contacting members in all 50 states, **CWops DXCC** award for contacting members in countries on the ARRL DXCC list, **CWops WAE** award for contacting members in Europe, and **CWops WAZ** award for contacting members in each of the 40 CQ zones. All contacts must be via CW and between current CWops members. To qualify for these awards, you must submit your logs via the tool at the CWops Award Tools [website](#) . You can also print out your awards certificates at that same website.

A set of tools for managing your awards status is provided on the CWops Award Tools website and if you regularly upload your logs your awards will be automatically tracked for you. To view complete data for all currently active participants and see where you and others rank among active participants in the awards program, use the [online tools](#). For more details on the tools provided, see the [August 2021 Solid Copy](#) article.

Please Join Us!

Fabian, DJ5CW, who created the website and the tools, made it extremely easy to participate in the awards program.

If you are not among the CWops members who are currently participating, please join us! It adds a lot of friendly competition and fun to your operating.

More Information

View our website for more information on the [CWops Awards Program](#). Send your feedback, questions or comments to cwopscam@w0tg.com.

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Here are the Top 100 ACA, ACMA and CMA QSO totals as of October 1, 2025.

ACA

Rank	Call	ACA
1	KR2Q	1769
2	KY4GS	1558
3	AA3B	1538
4	N5RZ	1403
5	K3WW	1393
6	N5TJ	1254
7	KC7V	1252
8	KO4VW	1239
9	OM2VL	1230
10	NA8V	1219
11	KG9X	1211
12	K7QA	1206
13	AA2IL	1162
14	F6HKA	1147
15	W4CMG	1146
16	N7US	1125
17	WT9U	1085
18	K1VUT	1080
19	VE3TM	1049
20	DL6KVA	1018
21	EA1X	1009
22	K1DJ	996
23	W8FN	992
24	AD5A	975
25	NJ3K	965
25	W9ILY	965
26	WT3K	957
27	K9WX	950
28	KC3M	947
29	WN7S	920
30	KM4FO	919
31	VK2GR	916
32	NE2V	895
33	K6NR	887
34	K1AJ	885
35	K1SM	877
36	K3JT	869
37	F5SGI	860
38	EA6BF	858
39	W1RM	857
40	N5KD	845
41	W0UO	844
42	K5OHY	835

ACMA

Rank	Call	ACMA
1	AA3B	5157
2	KR2Q	4848
3	N5RZ	4200
4	K3WW	4064
5	KY4GS	3820
6	OM2VL	3597
7	NA8V	3431
8	N5TJ	3387
9	KC7V	3299
10	K7QA	3268
11	KO4VW	3099
12	KG9X	2917
13	DL6KVA	2790
14	WT9U	2675
15	K1VUT	2612
16	AA2IL	2510
17	N7US	2494
18	W4CMG	2424
19	F6HKA	2416
20	EA1X	2380
21	AD5A	2370
22	VE3TM	2123
23	K9WX	2091
24	W8FN	2066
25	K1DJ	2053
26	WN7S	2024
27	W9ILY	1997
28	EA6BF	1955
29	WS7L	1926
30	K6NR	1908
31	K1AJ	1907
32	NJ3K	1902
33	W0UO	1784
34	KM4FO	1767
35	N5XE	1763
36	N4DW	1761
37	KC3M	1760
38	KW7Q	1751
39	W0VX	1713
40	WT3K	1709
41	N5KD	1707
42	K3JT	1682
43	SM6CUK	1669

CMA

Rank	Call	CMA
1	AA3B	15000
2	K3WW	11491
3	N5RZ	10698
4	KR2Q	10557
5	N5ZO	10203
6	DL6KVA	9750
6	NA8V	9750
7	W1RM	9525
8	F6HKA	9121
9	AD5A	8288
10	VE3KI	8280
11	K3WJV	8228
12	OM2VL	8177
13	K7QA	7965
14	KG9X	7944
15	KC7V	7863
16	N7US	7774
17	W9ILY	7529
18	WT9U	7201
19	K1VUT	7057
20	W0VX	6963
21	N4DW	6895
22	KY4GS	6793
23	K3JT	6776
24	K9WX	6709
25	N5TJ	6618
26	K6NR	6285
27	K1DJ	6239
28	SM6CUK	6131
29	N1DC	6129
30	WT3K	6118
31	W4WF	6083
32	N2UU	6059
33	K4IU	5998
34	WN7S	5927
35	9A1AA	5665
36	W8FN	5582
37	EA1X	5577
38	AA5JF	5565
39	G4BUE	5498
40	VE3TM	5474
41	KO4VW	5469
42	AC6ZM	5462

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ACA

43	WS7L	827
44	N4DW	818
45	KW1X	817
46	K3QP	805
46	KW7Q	805
47	NA4J	804
48	N3CKI	802
49	N1DC	800
50	WU6P	798
51	AC6ZM	794
52	WM4Q	793
53	K3ZA	787
53	W5AL	787
54	K0WA	782
55	DF7TV	781
56	EA6EJ	765
57	N9FZ	761
58	W4WFF	760
59	KR3E	754
60	KV8Q	750
61	N5XE	742
62	SM6CUK	733
63	AA5JF	729
64	N2UU	728
65	W0VX	709
66	N2EIM	708
66	N9UNX	708
67	AF5J	707
68	K4TZ	706
69	VE3KI	690
70	DL5XL	685
71	VE9KK	661
72	KT5V	647
72	WA9LEY	647
73	W9CF	644
74	K4IU	642
75	M0RYB	627
76	W8XAL	616
77	K4GM	615
78	AF4T	614
78	VE3INE	614
79	VE3MV	609
80	ND9M	607
81	KB8GAE	603
82	OZ3SM	602
83	NE5A	599
84	VE3KIU	596
85	G4PVM	590
86	KK0U	586

ACMA

44	EA6EJ	1665
45	W1RM	1626
46	KW1X	1623
47	NA4J	1619
48	WU6P	1617
49	W4WFF	1586
50	N2UU	1578
51	F5SGI	1565
52	VK2GR	1557
52	NE2V	1557
53	W5AL	1544
54	K1SM	1534
55	N3CKI	1525
56	AF5J	1461
57	DL5XL	1453
58	K5OHY	1443
59	N1DC	1441
60	WM4Q	1426
61	AC6ZM	1391
62	DF7TV	1376
63	M0RYB	1364
64	VE3KI	1356
65	K3ZA	1339
66	W9CF	1330
67	AA5JF	1320
68	KV8Q	1311
69	WA9LEY	1309
70	OZ3SM	1285
71	G4PVM	1283
72	K4IU	1273
72	VE3MV	1273
73	N9UNX	1250
74	K4GM	1225
75	N9FZ	1224
76	K4TZ	1185
77	AF4T	1170
78	W0TG	1164
79	K0WA	1159
80	K3QP	1153
81	DJ5CW	1139
82	ND9M	1097
83	KV1I	1095
84	WB5N	1092
85	KR3E	1089
86	VE9KK	1082
87	N5ER	1079
88	G3LDI	1058
89	VE3INE	1047
90	WS1L	1040

CMA

43	W0UO	5443
44	K1SM	5330
45	NJ3K	5290
46	N5XE	5128
47	GW0ETF	5104
48	NA4J	5090
49	AA2IL	5080
50	WA9LEY	5000
51	F6JOE	4911
52	WA4JUK	4832
53	WS7L	4795
54	OK1RR	4750
55	K4GM	4748
56	K3QP	4711
57	K1AJ	4698
58	KT5V	4632
59	VK2GR	4595
60	WN4AFP	4593
61	VE3MV	4534
62	DF7TV	4498
63	EA6BF	4469
64	OZ3SM	4453
65	I2WIJ	4406
65	DJ5CW	4406
66	W6AYC	4325
67	KM4FO	4307
68	K0WA	4305
69	N5KD	4251
70	W4CMG	4202
71	F5SGI	4167
72	KY0Q	4128
73	G4PVM	4062
74	W0TG	4059
75	DM6EE	4057
76	WS1L	4041
77	AF5J	4020
78	K0TC	4009
79	NE5A	3980
80	N1EN	3977
81	WU6P	3976
82	KV8Q	3951
83	W3WHK	3945
84	KW7Q	3888
85	KK0U	3881
86	M0RYB	3862
87	ND9M	3841
88	W2CDO	3819
89	AF4T	3737
90	EA6EJ	3695

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ACA

87	WE4AUB	580
88	KV1I	573
89	N1CFO	571
90	G3LDI	565
91	WB5N	560
92	KE4CR	558
93	KT4XN	551
94	N5ER	550
95	NB7O	545
96	GW0ETF	536
97	K0TC	530
97	K9CPO	530
98	K1RF	528
99	DJ5CW	527
99	N3RTW	527
100	AC3RA	521

ACMA

91	LY2MM	1018
92	KK0U	1000
92	K1RF	1000
93	WE4AUB	994
94	VE3KIU	991
95	NB7O	967
96	KB8GAE	962
97	G3NKC	960
98	W8XAL	956
99	KY0Q	955
100	W8OV	938
100	K9CW	938

CMA

91	NE2V	3673
92	SM0HEV	3638
93	K4TZ	3600
94	N3CKI	3585
95	HB9ARF	3582
96	KR3E	3517
97	KC3M	3465
98	K3ZA	3454
99	SP1D	3382
100	4X6GP	3323

73, Bill WØTG (CWops #1873)

CWops Operating Awards

XXT Schedule

SPEED	XST	DAY	TIME (UTC)	EXCHANGE	SPONSOR LINK
20 - 25	MST	Monday	1300 - 1400z	Name + QSO serial number	International CW Coun-
20 - 25	MST	Monday	1900 - 2000z	Name + QSO serial number	International CW Coun-
20 - 25	MST	Tuesday	0300 - 0400z	Name + QSO serial number	International CW Coun-
QRS	AWT	Wednesday	1145 - 1200z	RST + Name	A1Club
20+ wpm	AWT	Wednesday	1200 - 1300z	RST + Name	A1Club
25+ wpm	CWT	Wednesday	1300 - 1400z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	CWops
25+ wpm	CWT	Wednesday	1900 - 2000z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	CWops
25+ wpm	CWT	Thursday	0300 - 0400z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	CWops
25+ wpm	CWT	Thursday	0700 - 0800z	Name + CWops # (or S/P/C)	CWops
< 20 wpm	SST	Friday	2000 - 2100z	Name + S/P/C	K1USN
< 20 wpm	SST	Monday	0000 - 0100z	Name + S/P/C	K1USN



QTX: Enjoying the Art of Conversational CW

[Dan Romanchik](#), KB6NU

Why do you like to Ragchew?

On the CWops reflector (Groups.io) (<https://cwops.groups.io/g/main>), I recently asked the question, "Why do you like to ragchew?" I got the discussion started by noting, "One of the reasons I like to ragchew is to find out about the other operators. I find most hams to be very interesting people, with good stories to tell, and by chewing the rag with them, I get to hear those stories."

There were many good replies to my query. Here is a sampling:

Stan N8HN: "I like to ragchew for a few different reasons. Mainly because it helps develop and maintain my CW skills like head copy, code speed and use of pro signs and punctuation. Quick exchanges of signal reports really don't help build those skills like a complete conversation does. I also like to meet other operators and hear about their station and other hobbies, so many interesting people in our hobby and I tend to remember other operators when I've learned a few things about them. Lastly, I like to ragchew with operators using different speeds, I figure that there are times when I'm probably helping a newer CW user; lots of operators took their time when I was new and learning which I appreciated."

Jim KF9VV: "I enjoy ragchewing because it is something done without a schedule. The joy of swapping stories is another attraction and building relationships over time with others who routinely will answer a CQ."

Tom DG5CW: "Ragchewing perfectly marries my love for traveling and technology. As someone who travels frequently, I love to spend time connecting with local hams in the regions I plan to visit next. There's no better way to get a feel for a place, and decide if its worthwhile to bring radio equipment for doing some portable operation, than chatting with someone who lives there and shares the same passion. These conversations often even turned into invitations. It's like having local guides, just waiting to share their knowledge."

Jim K4QPL: "I think it's really the fun of head copying while conversing in Morse code. Do it at a speed you are comfortable with and be sure you are set up for QSK. Try to get away from "taking turns" or using "BK". Exchange comments naturally as you would in conversation. A short dit string will interrupt and you can make a short comment, pause, and let the other guy or gal continue. Or at the end of a sentence, just pause for the other ham to chime in. No need for formal call sign exchanges either. Just every now and then within the ten minute rule send "de K4QPL" and continue the conversation. A good CWops friend and I chat often on 80m CW that way for a half hour or so about a lot of common subjects, inject a comment, and sometimes just move on to a question or another subject. It also helps if you know the person and can treat a ragchew much as you would an "eyeball QSO." You can invite the other station to operate this way by saying, "QSK. PSE JUMP IN WHEN YOU WISH." Sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn't."

Gary AF8A: "I enjoy ragchewing because it takes my full attention to copy and send CW while creating and maintaining a narrative with another person in real time. I find it highly relaxing be-

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cause everything else I may be doing or thinking about simply 'disappears' once I am firmly entrenched in a good QSO. Today's society may value those who can multi-task seemingly ad infinitum....but we should also praise people who can, while shutting out all else, do one thing and do it well: Connecting with another human being."

Hal WB4AEG: "There are lots of interesting old-timers out there. They all have our stories to tell and I enjoying hearing them. Plus, its relaxing."

Saul W3WHK: "As someone who has travelled a lot in the past, I especially enjoy finding out where the op on the other end is located, even to the point of finding them on QRZ maps. Sometimes it's a place I've visited, and comparing notes often leads to an interesting discussion, or even an invitation to visit. With European ops, I can talk about my musical tours there, and, when appropriate, give my conversational German a try."

John AD1JM: "My ragchewing consists entirely of skeds with friends. (I've tried CQing for ragchews, but the results were spotty, so I've lost enthusiasm for it.) Ragchewing allows me to get to know my friends better and to keep up with developments in their lives, even though (for the most part) they live too far away to bump into in the supermarket. Oddly, I feel I'm a better conversationalist on the air than in-person. I think this is because CW slows down the conversation so that I have more time to think of both answers and questions than I would in face-to-face conversation. Ragchewing has become an integral part of many friendships, near and far, friendships which occupy important places in my life."

Dick N9EEE: "I ragchew to learn something about the other person who also took the time to learn Morse code as a communications mode. It often reveals some commonality that leads to a longer conversation - ask me about sailing. In a DX ragchew, I'm always delighted when they want to move on from a 5NN exchange; I'm curious to learn what's on their mind and happy to reciprocate."

To read the entire thread on the CWops mailing list, which morphed into a discussion of how to ragchew after the fourth or fifth reply, go to <https://cwops.groups.io/g/main/topic/115470005>. In that discussion of how to ragchew, Dave, W8OV, mentioned the article, "Ragchewing 101" by John Silzel, N6HCN, which appeared in the April 2019 *Solid Copy* (<https://cwops.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/solid-copy-2019.04.4.pdf>). In the article, John offers a lot of great advice for new ragchewers as well as some of us old-timers.

73, Dan #1418



AAØYY: Not as much on-the-air activity on the air for me this month due to a new puppy and traveling. I enjoy working friends that I have worked in the past, so please call whenever you hear me. I had not heard from my buddy Darrell AF4PX in awhile but found him testing/building yet another antenna for his RV. Great signal.... and fist Darrell!

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ABØWW: 2 mQTX and 1 QTX were DX on 12 meters, unusual for my low non-rotating dipole in California. Longest QSOs were with GM3WUX and WA7NCL.

DG5CW: This month's QTX score got fueled by fantastic band conditions, that let me log several long-lasting DX contacts, and I sealed the deal with two marathon ragchews (qualifying for the HSC) within EU distance. All while operating portable outdoors.

DK9HE: QRV as PA/DK9HE this month I had my longest CWops QTX with Tom HA/DG5CW. Due to poor conditions we struggled with QSB and managed some band changes too.

DL5XL: This month, I did not have too much time to spend on the air. My job kept me away from the station for a while, and one weekend was needed to repair the doublet which was destroyed in a storm. The most enjoyable QSO probably was a 48 minute chat with K4AEN, CWops #1861, with solid signals on 17m.

K8UDH: Another great month with fun ragchew QSOs, like the one with WU6X. We had many similar interests, in addition to ham radio.

KB6NU: Well, I missed my goal of one QTX/day, but I had nice QSOs with CWops, including WZ2J, N8AI, ND4K, NI4E, and W4MQC/1.

KF9VV: Enjoyed some nice QRP QSOs while traveling.

KG5IEE: This month I put my old vintage rigs on the air a lot. Since I use a straight key on those rigs it means I am only about 12-14 wpm. Since I am slower, I end up with a lot more QSOs with hams who are newer to CW. Some are making the transition from just POTA to ragchews. Very rewarding and fun QSOs.

KR2Q: Slow month for ragchews.

NØBM: A good month of ragchews. Always amazed at my fellow hams.... homemade bugs; a detailed description of the ZS6BKW antenna: living in a city (Bristol, TN), where State Street is the dividing line between TN and VA. That's good for two state QSO parties with a short trip. It's a great mode and a great hobby.

N2DA: Nice sked ragchews with the usual suspects, including WA3JJT, AJ1DM, W4TG, and WA3PYU. Enjoyed nice band conditions most of the month on 40 meters.

N7HCN: Looking forward to winter weather and CW by the woodstove!

N9EEE: All QSOs were QRP from a KH1. Thanks to my contacts for your keen listening skills.

WA4IAR: Not much time to operate lately, as I have been doing some traveling. Always good to get back on the air.

WS1L: I was away for a good bit of the month but still had some nice QTX with Alan, W4MQC, back on Pine Island, Dick, W4PID about our fall foliage, and Eric, NI4E about my travels.

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QTX - September 2025

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
N7HCN	37	F5IJ	17	AAØYY	10	K8UDH	6	DL5XL	1
KB6NU	29	KG5IEE	15	KF9VV	8	KR2Q	5		
WS1L	27	WA4IAR	15	DG5CW	7	ABØWW	4		
KY4GS	25	K9OZ	14	GWØETF	6	G4KKU	2		
DK9HE	19	N2DA	12	NØBM	6	N9EEE	1		

mQTX - September 2025

<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>
KY4GS	43	DK9HE	16	AAØYY	9	WA4IAR	3	PE2V	1
KG5IEE	27	DG5CW	16	NØBM	7	K8UDH	3		
GWØETF	27	KR2Q	16	KF9VV	5	ABØWW	3		
WS1L	18	G4KKU	14	N7HCN	4	DL5XL	2		
F5IJ	17	KB6NU	12	N9EEE	4	KB4DE	1		

QTX - Total 2025

<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>QTX</u>
WS1L	392	DK9HE	175	N9EEE	31	G4KKU	11	DF7TV	4
VE3WH	359	KR2Q	156	N9FZ	31	K7VM	8	K1NW	4
N7HCN	338	KG5IEE	151	N5LB	28	KE4I	8	SV2BBK	3
WA4IAR	324	MØMZB	136	NØBM	23	MØSDB	8	W3WHK	3
N8AI	303	KF9VV	118	DG5CW	22	W6QX	8	PG4I	2
KY4GS	244	F5IJ	104	DL5XL	20	AI3A	7		
KB6NU	230	GØFOZ	84	ABØWW	19	K4LFL	7		
KCØVKN	226	N2DA	79	W8OV	17	PE2V	7		
AAØYY	202	K8UDH	72	AE4GS	15	N3JT	6		
K9OZ	189	AJ1DM	67	GWØETF	14	VK3QB	5		

mQTX - Total 2025

<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>mQTX</u>
KY4GS	479	WA4IAR	129	DF7TV	40	ABØWW	26	N3JT	9
WS1L	280	DK9HE	124	VK3QB	40	SV2BBK	26	KE4I	7
N8AI	209	MØMZB	112	G4KKU	36	KB4DE	24	W6QX	7
AAØYY	198	KF9VV	104	K8UDH	34	PG4I	23	K7VM	5
KG5IEE	175	GWØETF	75	N9FZ	34	AE4GS	20	K1NW	4
KR2Q	169	DG5CW	60	NØBM	33	MMØUMH	20	N5LB	2
VE3WH	167	F5IJ	51	AJ1DM	29	W8OV	15		
GØFOZ	148	DL5XL	47	PE2V	28	MØSDB	14		
KB6NU	143	N7HCN	42	N9EEE	27	K4LFL	9		



My Story: New Member Introductions

Compiled by [Tim Gennett, K9WX](#) (CWops #1462)

Larry Simoneau, W1SIM #3784

My ham radio journey began in 1972 at the FCC office in the Boston Custom House Building where I took the General Class exam and also the 13 wpm Morse code test. I received the WA1QFP call. Prior to that I had built a triple conversion tube type receiver to learn CW off the air. It worked, but it drifted too much for reliable CW copy, so I bought a Heathkit SB-303 receiver kit. That had stability and helped me get my code speed up for the 13 wpm code test. I then purchased a used Gonset GSB-100 transmitter to go with it and started making CW contacts.



Next, I moved to RTTY. During the 1970s this was a popular conversational mode with lots of activity on the HF bands. I had a regular sked with another local ham, and we printed a lot of paper (both sides). We also had a two meter RTTY only repeater in Rhode Island that was quite active. When RTTY waned, I drifted away from ham radio to another hobby, but I kept my license active. See photo of the other hobby.

I also passed the test for an FCC Commercial Radiotelephone License at the same FCC office around 1974.

After repairing two way radios for a few years, I became increasingly interested in microcomputers, building my own Z80 computer system. I then took a job at the University of Rhode Island and stayed for 30 years, earning a Computer Science degree while there.

A friend rekindled my interest in ham radio, so I started reading about the new digital modes and decided to go for the Extra class license. Today's Extra license isn't like the license of old where 20 wpm was needed as well as a written exam that you really had to study for. I admire those who have a 'real' Extra license. I switched my call to W1SIM thinking it was easier to send in CW, but it turns out it is more difficult for stations to copy because of all the dits. I add spaces between dits on the initial call.

Gave FT8 a try and soon lost interest in that mode. I found a RTTY net on Saturday mornings on 40 meters that I enjoy, a very good group. I also started back in CW and wanted to get my speed up over the 15 wpm rut I was in. Meeting John, AJ1DM, who graciously mentored several of us locals, was a big break. After a few months of John's excellent tutoring, two of us have become CWops members. I know I would never have made it without John's mentoring and encouragement. K1NW also provided much appreciated enthusiasm.

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Thank you to K1NW, KD1DM, WA1SKQ, N1BS and AJ1DM for sponsoring my membership.

Santiago Montalvo, KQ1O CWops #3778

Greetings all, happy to be here. My name is Santiago Montalvo, you can call me Santi. I'm terrible at bios so here it goes.

Every year I get a demand from a few states for money; it is a yearly reminder that I work as an attorney. I enjoy doing CW whether it is contesting, POTA, or rag chewing; it's all fun.

Apart from CW I also enjoy SSTV and ATV. Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful day.



Thomas Fritzsche (TOM), DJ1TF/JJ1QPB CWops #3790

First, I want to thank my CWops nominator HI-RO-san (JJ1FXF), and my sponsors, KEN-san (JN1THL), Atsu-san (JE1TRV), Masa-san (JA4MRL), and KAN-san (JI3CJP). Their support enabled me to become CWops #3790.

When I read the new member introductions in the September issue of *Solid Copy*, I was especially interested in their different ham radio and CW histories. So, I'd like to share my personal journey into CW.

Born on July 4, 1974, I was a kid of the 70s and 80s. Like many, I received an electronics kit to build various circuits, which included an AM receiver. I was fascinated by transmitter circuits, but the mandatory Morse code requirement kept me from getting my license. Years later, in 2019, I found out the code requirement had been dropped and I'm active as DJ1TF ever since.

I tried phone mode, but it was difficult at my location due to antenna restrictions, and I felt it wasn't really my mode. I then turned to digital modes but quickly got bored because the computer does most of the QSO. Eventually, I returned to my joy of building electronic circuits and built a QCX kit. It worked! But I still had no clue about CW.

I started practicing a few characters and, perhaps too soon, used the QCX on the air. I wasn't expecting to get responses with only 5W, as I had struggled with 100W on SSB. To my big surprise, people came back! Since that day, I've been in love with CW and QRP.



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I practiced CW on my own until I convinced the chairman of my local radio club, DARC (A02) Bruchsal, Alois DL3IAC, to start a club practice group. As he is a pianist and organ player, I learned to treat Morse code as music and the key as an instrument. My approach was the opposite of what many people teach; I started slow speed was coming automatically. A rather unconventional way of learning CW?

What I've noticed is that I personally need to be in a very relaxed mood for solid head copy. If I feel stressed, just listening to CW helps me relax; it's like meditation.

I worked in Tokyo for a few years and speak some Japanese. Since I have relatives in Japan, I visit them every year. Because of this, I got my Japanese callsign, JJ1QPB. However, I found that operating in Japan on SSB is even more challenging due to the language barrier. But after learning enough CW to operate there, I've noticed how easily CW connects people. Sometimes, when I just use my handle TOM, people don't even realize I'm German until I ask for QSL via DJ1TF.

Besides operating, I'm active in educating people to become ham radio operators in our club's license classes, and I built a German ham license test simulator. I'm very happy to bring young people into the hobby, including my 12-year-old twin kids, Kento and Kaito. They got their first license last year and upgraded to the middle class this year as DO9KAI and DO7KEN. I hope they find their way to CW soon!

Personally, I prefer ragchew QSOs the most because I feel CW is about communicating with people. I still practice to improve using a contest simulator that many CWops members may be aware of: MorseRunner, written by VE3NEA. As a Mac user, I had trouble running the Windows program, so I manually rewrote it from scratch to run in a web browser as WebMorseRunner. You can access this software for your own practice at: <https://fritzsche.github.io/WebMorseRunner>. I hope you have fun with this simple software.

Besides ham radio and my family, I've been learning Japanese for many years and recently started learning the tenor saxophone, as I love jazz music and wanted to complement my Morse key as a second instrument.

Fabio Grisafi, IT9GSF/ W7GSF CWops #3796

Sono nato nel 1963 e la mia passione per la Radio è nata quando da piccolo ho preso la scossa e rotto la vecchia radio a valvole di mia nonna. Ero affascinato nell'ascoltare le tante lingue straniere che arrivavano da quell'altoparlante e ricordo l'occhio magico che indicava l'intensità del segnale ricevuto. CB già a sette anni, ascoltavo sempre le onde corte e spesso sentivo delle interruzioni dovute a qualcuno che trasmetteva da vicino casa mia a Palermo: era la manipolazione CW di Piero Marino, IT9ZGY, ben conosciuto come "Mr. Sicily" che poi ho conosciuto e frequentato per tanti anni. Con lui facevamo tante passeggiate con il suo bellissimo cane di nome Yagi parlando di propagazione e di DX.

Ho ottenuto la mia licenza IT9GSF nel 1982 dopo aver fatto SWL per anni. Mi sono appassionato

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subito nei contest e nel CW. Ho stabilito diversi record nei contest CW e SSB ARRL e CQWW. Ho anche la licenza americana Extra Class con nominativo W7GSF.

Sono sposato con Sabrina ed abbiamo una figlia di quasi otto anni, Flavia.

Flavia sta imparando l'alfabeto Morse e spesso usa il mio PC per allenarsi grazie alle lezioni on line di LCWO. Spero di averla con me in un prossimo contest CW.

Sono un giornalista professionista e lavoro come capo producer nella sede RAI TV per la Sicilia. Sono molto impegnato nel lavoro e spesso faccio turni molto lunghi, sei giorni alla settimana. Mi resta poco tempo per sistemare la stazione radio che ha bisogno di molta manutenzione.

La mia stazione radio, infatti, si trova quasi in cima ad una collina alta 900 metri sul livello del mare, dove c'è molto vento, a circa 50 miglia da casa mia. Sono attrezzato con Elecraft K3, lineare autocostruito e antenne Yagi monobanda su vari tralicci. Opero la stazione in remoto e, purtroppo, ogni tanto, non riesco a concludere qualche QSO perché il link via radio cade a causa di fading.

La vera stazione contest, alla progettazione della quale partecipo attivamente, è quella del gruppo "Contest School" di Antonello, IT9EQO, dall'altra parte della Sicilia. Il nominativo è I19P. Purtroppo non abbiamo molti operatori CW in Sicilia e quindi invitiamo spesso operatori provenienti dal resto del mondo.

Grazie all'amicizia di Antonello, IT9EQO, ho potuto conoscere diversi radioamatori da tutto il mondo, compresi alcuni membri del CWops e, tra questi, il mio grande amico Domenico, IZ8JAI, che ringrazio per l'invito a far parte del CWops.

Ringrazio anche Allan VK2GR (VL2G), Frank K1EBY e Keith K7MOA per la loro sponsorizzazione.

Sono quindi molto onorato di far parte di CWops e spero di farmi sentire più spesso in aria quanto prima, assieme a mia figlia Flavia. Di sicuro, non appena sarò in pensione tra cinque anni (Sigh!) mi sentirete più spesso.

I was born in 1963 and my passion for radio was born when I was a child. I got the shock and broke my grandmother's old tube radio. I was fascinated to listen to the many foreign languages that came from that speaker, and I remember the magic eye that indicated the strength of the signal received. CB already at the age of seven, I always listened to shortwave and often heard interruptions due to someone who was broadcasting my house in Palermo from close by: it was the CW signal of Piero Marino, IT9ZGY, well known as "Mr. Sicily" whom I then knew and frequented for many years. With him we took many walks with his beautiful dog named Yagi talking about propagation and DX.

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I got my IT9GSF license in 1982 after doing SWL for years. I immediately became passionate about contests and the CW. I have set several records in the CW and SSB ARRL and CQWW contests. I also have the American Extra Class license with call sign W7GSF.

I am married to Sabrina, and we have a daughter of almost eight years, Flavia.

Flavia is learning the Morse alphabet and often uses my PC to train thanks to LICW's online lessons. I hope to have her with me in an upcoming CW contest.

I am a professional journalist, and I work as chief producer in the RAI TV headquarters for Sicily. I am very busy at work and often work very long shifts, six days a week. I have little time left to fix the radio station which needs a lot of maintenance.



My radio station, in fact, is located almost at the top of a hill 900 meters high above sea level, where it is very windy, about 50 miles from my house. I am equipped with Elecraft K3, self-built linear and single-band Yagi antennas on various masts. I operate the station remotely and, unfortunately, every now and then, I can't conclude some QSOs because the radio link drops due to fading.

The real contest station, in the design of which I actively participate, is that of Antonello's "Contest School" group, IT9EQO, on the other side of Sicily. The call sign is II9P. Unfortunately, we do not have many CW operators in Sicily and therefore we often invite operators from the rest of the world.

Thanks to Antonello's friendship, IT9EQO, I was able to meet several radio amateurs from all over the world, including some members of the CWops and, among them, my great friend Domenico, IZ8JAI, whom I thank for the invitation to join the CWops.

I also thank Allan VK2GR (VL2G), Frank K1EBY and Keith K7MOA for their sponsorship.

I am therefore very honored to be part of CWops, and I hope to make myself more often in the air as soon as possible, together with my daughter Flavia. For sure, as soon as I'm retired in five years (Sigh!) you'll hear from me more often.

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Eric Bikales, AC6NT CWops #3797

I was so lucky to have a mentor, Dr. Mike Carmichael WØMAF, who lived up the street from me. This was 1963 in Kansas City. I was only 12 but totally fascinated by his 80' 4-element Quad — that rotated! He took an immediate interest in showing me his ham shack with all Collins S-line, easily convincing me to get my Novice license. Dr. Carmichael sent me home with a Morse code machine that used paper tapes, I think. I learned the code, studied, and got my Novice. That started my journey with HF CW. I wound up with a General class license.



As music took over in high school, I put my radio interests aside until after college. I moved to Los Angeles in '74 and did a lot of touring with various artists and frankly, had a lot of free time while on the road. When I started reading QST and CQ there appeared to be quite an interest in QRP operating. This was new to me but seemed perfect for traveling! Small radios, portable antennas, all practical to take on the road. I decided to get my Extra class license because I didn't want the frequency restrictions.

CW has always been my preferred mode. I feel comfortable with it and to me, there is a musical component to sending it. The ops I most admire on the air have very fluid sending ability. It's a lot like playing the piano.

My impression has been that CWops is for the CW superstars, and I didn't imagine ever being a member. I'm still working on my ability to head copy and increase my speed. So, I am beyond honored to have been invited by Jim Vaughan WB0RLJ. When I got his invite, I had no idea that some of the ops I have great admiration for were already members and were willing to sponsor me. Shoutout to Julia N1XV, Tim K5OHY and Forrest KI7QCF.

I'm excited to be here, make more friends and push my limits. I'm grateful to be a part of CWops. Thanks to all!

Justin Swain, N8JMS CWops #3793

I first learned the basics of CW in June of 2003 in my hometown of Tonawanda, NY, just north of Buffalo. It was the summer after high school, and I wasn't licensed yet, but my good friend Tom (KC2CIK) was helping me prepare for the Technician exam. Tom was planning to upgrade to General during the same exam session, but he needed to learn code at 5 wpm. I didn't need to learn CW, but I wanted to! We learned all the characters through silly mnemonic devices that haunt me to this day. (Catch it catch it, pay day today!)

Tom and I would practice sending call signs and words on straight key oscillators. I would hear

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local repeaters ID in CW at crazy fast speeds. My favorite was N3AU, because it would also send "Niagara Falls NY /R" at about 25 WPM. I thought that had the coolest rhythm to it! We both passed our exams, and I became KC2LVP, but my CW journey would be stalled for another 20 years. I lost interest in ham radio during college and moved away shortly thereafter.

Fast forward to spring 2023. I was now settled in Columbus, OH. I fired up my old HT, which was still setup with all the Buffalo area repeaters. I reprogrammed it with Columbus repeaters and heard those familiar CW IDs. This awakened something within me! I spent the next days and weeks going down YouTube rabbit holes, learning all I could about HF, end-fed antennas, SDRs, and this program called Parks on the Air. I bought a Xiegu G90, secondhand Bencher paddles, EFHW antenna, and set up a modest station at my home. I was so excited that I could use my very basic CW skills and operate on 80, 40, and 15 as a Technician. I saw on the RBN that my signal was being heard hundreds of miles away, and I was hooked.



Thus began my re-obsession with CW: hunting POTA activators and seeing if I could match their speed; calling CQ on 40 meters at night (at 15 wpm, when I had absolutely no business going that fast); and going from writing down every character in a notebook as I heard it to being able to head copy short words. After about 3 months and plenty of mistakes later, I felt confident enough to do my very first POTA activation.

I upgraded to General in the fall of 2023 and changed to a vanity call sign. Since then, I have made CW learning a priority, dedicating about 1-2 hours of some form of practice each day. I enjoy SKCC (using a bug), ragchewing, POTA, QRP operations, and I'm slowly venturing into contesting.

Thanks to Forrest (KI7QCF), Tim (K5OHY), Gabe (WN7JT), Si (WD5JR), and Scott (K4FR) for the many QSOs and vouching for my abilities. I'm honored to have been nominated for this organization. I look forward to celebrating this communication art form and continuing my CW proficiency journey.

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